

# Aide-de-Camp's Library



सत्यमेव जयते

Rashtrapati Bhavan  
New Delhi

Accn. No. 434

Call No. IX(6) - G

Aide-de-Camp's Library







# A Guardsman's Memories



*T Russell & Sons (Photographers) Ltd*

THE AUTHOR, 1919.

# A Guardsmen's Memories

A Book of Recollections

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL  
LORD EDWARD GLEICHEN

K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

AUTHOR OF 'WITH THE CAMEL CORPS UP THE NILE,' 'WITH THE  
MISSION TO MENELIK,' 'THE DOINGS OF THE FIFTEENTH  
INFANTRY BRIGADE,' 'CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR,'  
'LONDON'S OPEN-AIR STATUARY,' ETC., ETC.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

William Blackwood & Sons Ltd.  
Edinburgh and London

1932

**PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

## FOREWORD.

---

I AM afraid that if anyone expects to find very serious matter in this book he will be disappointed. Most writers of Memoirs and Autobiographies appear to have an unlimited store of Diaries, Letters and Moral Reflections upon which to draw, and from these they compile those eminently respectable two- and even three-volume works through which from time to time we find ourselves compelled to wade. I, alas, have no such advantages.

I did not begin to keep a proper Diary till the beginning of this century. My efforts in this direction, previous to that date, were mostly spasmodic entries of the 'Forget-what-did' type, and I soon gave them up. And even after 1900, though I began a fairly full Diary with the Boer War, it soon petered out during the ensuing years, and assumed more and more the shape of an engagement-book in which the entries, though occasionally useful as reminding me of things and of dates, were nothing like so full as they ought to have been, and rarely reported people's conversations, or even sayings. And this I do deplore, for I have met a good many interesting people in my time.

Letters I always throw into the wastepaper-basket as soon as I decently can, and my wanderings in many places were not conducive to the collection of much in the way of *paperasses*. I *have* kept a few letters, it is true, but most of these would be of no interest to my readers, and as for some others which might perhaps be so, I cannot for the life of me find them now that I want them.

Moral Reflections are beyond me ; but I have written several books and articles and reports on some of my experiences, and on these I have drawn to a considerable extent where my memory has been at fault. It is curious how vividly one's memory is apt to dwell on some small incident when its much more important context is completely forgotten.

This is no doubt the case with myself. But though I have tried to keep my proportions correct, I may quite possibly not have succeeded in some instances ; and in such cases I must throw myself upon the indulgence of my readers.

E. G.

*January 1932.*

# CONTENTS.

---

CHAP.	PAGE
I. EARLY DAYS. 1863—CHARTERHOUSE . . .	1
II. SANDHURST: THE GRENADIERS . . .	14
III. THE SUDAN. 1884-85 . . .	24
IV. A TRIP TO RUSSIA . . .	46
V. PERSIA . . .	62
VI. 1886-1888 . . .	77
VII. THE GERMAN MANŒUVRES, 1888 . . .	81
VIII. AFTER CHAMOIS . . .	91
IX. CANADA . . .	105
X. THE STAFF COLLEGE AND ALDERSHOT. 1890-92	110
XI. MOROCCO . . .	120
XII. ON THE SPY . . .	133
XIII. INTELLIGENCE WORK AT THE W.O. 1886-88, 1894-99 . . .	140
XIV. THE SUDAN AGAIN. 1896 . . .	149
XV. ABYSSINIA. 1897 . . .	156
XVI. MONTENEGRO. 1899 . . .	168
XVII. SOME RANDOM INTELLIGENCE RECOLLECTIONS .	176
XVIII. THE BOER WAR. 1899 . . .	190
XIX. THE BOER WAR. 1900 . . .	201
XX. THE COLVILLE EPISODES . . .	210
XXI. PRETORIA AND THE EASTERN L. OF C. . .	223



XXII. EGYPT AND THE SUDAN . . . . .	231
XXIII. BERLIN . . . . .	252
XXIV. BERLIN— <i>continued</i> . . . . .	266
XXV. THE UNITED STATES . . . . .	281
XXVI. MORE OF AMERICA . . . . .	293
XXVII. A.D.M.O. 2 . . . . .	312
XXVIII. MOROCCO AGAIN . . . . .	320
XXIX. A TRIP TO TURKEY . . . . .	330
XXX. I LEAVE THE I.D. . . . .	337
XXXI. BELFAST . . . . .	349
XXXII. BELFAST. 1912, 1913 . . . . .	359
XXXIII. BELFAST. 1914 . . . . .	373
XXXIV. BOILING UP FOR TROUBLE—AND WAR . . . . .	388

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

THE AUTHOR . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
LANGENBURG. SCHLOSSGARTEN . . . . .	} <i>Facing p. 7</i>
THE CASTLE OF LANGENBURG . . . . .	
THE 'OWLS.' STAFF COLLEGE SECOND XI. (CRICKET), 1891 . . . . .	,, 112
THE STAFF OF THE 9TH DIVISION . . . . .	,, 206
SCENES IN A "DISTURBED DISTRICT," ORANGE FREE STATE, 1900 . . . . .	,, 224
MILITARY ATTACHÉS AT KAISERMANÖVER, 1904	,, 258



# A Guardsman's Memories.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY DAYS. 1863—CHARTERHOUSE.

I HAVE always been fond of travelling, and I started early in life, for at the age of one I went to Gibraltar.

My father was then still in the Navy, and in those days (1864) had a charmingly pleasant billet; for he commanded H.M.S. *Raccoon*, a frigate of twenty-one guns, with Headquarters at Gib., a shore billet as Deputy Captain of the Port and a roving commission in the Mediterranean, the duties of which consisted, as far as I can make out, chiefly in transporting and proffering official hospitality to any guests of the nation who wanted to see the Mediterranean or any ports therein. This does not seem to have been a very arduous duty, for guests were few and far between. But he had also to undertake the naval education of the Duke of Edinburgh (Prince Alfred as he was then), and from what my father subsequently told me I do not think this was entirely a bed of roses; for the Prince, although shaping well as a sailor, was of a somewhat wayward disposition at that period, and his high spirits more than once led him into minor troubles with the authorities.

I cannot say I remember much about those days; but I can distinctly call to mind (it came back to

me in a flash when I was seven years old, and the memory has remained with me ever since) the cabin in the *Racoon* in which we travelled out. My nurse had a cot close under the porthole, was generally seasick and strongly objected to the ship's biscuits which were proffered to her as a remedy by my father's kind old steward, Paice by name. My sister Feo and I were slung in hammocks, and I have a distinct recollection of being carefully taken out of mine by Paice and pressed most unwillingly to his rough coat and hairy face (bluejackets all wore bushy whiskers in those days). I might add that my father subsequently corroborated my youthful memory on these points, and particularly the incident of the biscuits; so I may perhaps claim more credence for my statement than might at first appear.

The Governor of Gibraltar in those days was General Sir William Codrington, and he very kindly allowed my father and mother<sup>1</sup> the use of the Governor's cottage, just round the corner of Europa Point. Of my infant life there the only outstanding incidents (as I subsequently heard) were, first, that I managed to jam my head through some railings and, my ears, even at that early age, being of abnormal size, was unable to extricate my head without the assistance of a local blacksmith. Secondly, being seized by a dangerous fit of croup when I was alone, I luckily made such appalling noises that I attracted the attention of Mrs Crutchley,<sup>2</sup> who happened to be passing along the road; she rushed in and, I believe, literally saved my life.

My next travels took me in the direction of my father's old home at Langenburg (in Württemberg)

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with naval regulations, my mother had not been allowed to travel out in the *Racoon*.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of the Colonel of the Welch Fusiliers, then quartered at Gib., and mother of the late Major-General Sir Charles Crutchley and other old friends.

in 1869 ; and well do I remember our crossing from Harwich to Antwerp. Not being too well blessed with this world's goods, my father economised on cabins for the family, and, much to our delight, we all passed the night lying on the deck rolled up in rugs. Visits in those days lasted a good deal longer than the hectic scurries of nowadays, and we stayed at the old castle of Langenburg for nearly three months. It was there that we made the first acquaintance of our cousins Erni, Elli and ' little ' Feo Hohenlohe ; and my chief recollection is that of Erni and myself robbing the apple- and pear-trees in secret, gorging on the proceeds, and then, in a tardy fit of repentance, bursting into tears whilst we held each other's hands and anxiously discussed the prospects of going hereafter to heaven or the other place. (But we never told.)

My uncle Hermann was a charming person, and I had a deep affection for him all my life (he died in 1913). He had been in the Austrian Cavalry, and in the campaign of 1859 his horse had been shot dead in a charge, whilst the whole of the brigade had ridden over him without touching him. Thereafter he had joined the German service, and in the war of 1870 he was in charge of Red Cross arrangements in the XIVth Corps of the Crown Prince's Southern Army. Here he was present at the siege of Strasbourg. (By a strange coincidence he found himself many years after, at the beginning of this century, in the town as Governor-General of Alsace-Lorraine.) After this episode he took part in the Belfort operations under von Werder, a sturdy, weather-beaten, kind-hearted old warrior, whose acquaintance I made later (and who presented me, at the age of nine, with his photograph) ; and eventually he became a General of Cavalry—though I fancy it was a purely honorary rank, for I do not think he ever commanded any troops. He was always delightfully courteous, even to us children,

had a great sense of humour combined with violent outbursts of temper which never lasted more than two minutes, and was one of the best shots, with either gun or rifle, that I have ever seen.

In spite of their very limited income my father and mother used to do a great deal of travelling in those days. Sometimes they took us with them—for we went to Paris in the summer of 1871 and saw the Colonne Vendôme lying on the ground and the Tuileries a mass of ruins—but more often they left us at home, either at St James' Palace, where we had rooms, or with my grandmother in Eaton Square or at Hampton Court.

My father had left the Navy in 1866 for reasons of ill-health, for he had never really recovered from a bad attack of cholera in the Crimea, followed by severe dysentery that he had contracted in the China War of 1857. Here he had been flag-lieutenant to Commodore Sir Harry Keppel. They both distinguished themselves at the famous little action of Fatshan Creek, where their boat was smashed by a round shot and they had to swim for their lives. There was a strong movement in favour of my father's getting the V.C. for the part he played—saving the life of a wounded bluejacket in the water under a heavy fire—but owing to certain personal reasons he never received it.

Looking about for a means of livelihood, he took to sculpture, and trained for several years under Theed before starting work and a studio on his own account. The Queen was very kind to him, and gave him his first 'order'—a sleeping nymph—and thereafter he received more and more commissions, for he really had considerable talent. This is not the place to expatiate on his works; but it may be mentioned that, besides a large number of busts and statuettes, he eventually carried out a good deal of important work in the way of monuments—notably the big Alfred the Great Memorial

at Wantage and the Prince Imperial at Woolwich. But at first he had great difficulties to overcome, chiefly moral ones. For in those days it was an unheard-of thing that a man in his stratum of life should work with his hands, and actually gain money by the proceeds: the old traditions still held, that the only professions open to a gentleman were the fighting services, the Church and the Bar. But my dear old father was brimful of common-sense, besides being a delightfully genial person, beloved of all, full of energy and perseverance; and he gained his way in the end.

My father and mother had started their married life in some tiny rooms under the Clock Tower at St James' Palace; but as the family grew, the Queen very kindly transferred us to a suite of ground-floor rooms on the other side of the Palace looking out on to the big garden—of which, much to our enjoyment, we had the run. The best quarters in London I have always called them; but I wonder what a modern Office of Works inspector would have said had he seen them in those days. My 'bedroom,' for instance, which I inhabited between the ages of five and twelve, consisted of the far corner of a dark passage-box-room, partitioned off by a wooden screen; and in this three-cornered den, dark all the year round—for the only window of the box-room gave, on the far side, on a passage under a dark archway—there literally was barely room to dress or even to turn round; yet I was quite happy there. All the rooms were at first very few in number and very small. The servants were crushed together, and the sanitary arrangements, with which we were blissfully content at the time, were perfectly appalling; why we did not all die of typhoid I cannot imagine. Judged by the modest retinues of to-day, we had an extraordinary number of servants; I know that, even before my second sister, Valda, arrived in 1868, we had no less than



nine, not counting the coachman (for we were actually 'carriage-folk' in those days). But they were cheap, for I came across an old household account-book of my mother's the other day, and found, in addition to generally scathing comments on their want of probity and efficiency, that the lower servants' wages ran from £10 to £14 a year!

My father had somewhat original ideas as regards the selection of the female portion of the establishment, and he insisted at first on my mother choosing the maids for their good looks rather than for their domestic virtues. The consequences were catastrophic; for the Queen's Guard was within a few yards of us, and the conjunction of Mars and Venus proved too much for our constellation, which very soon had to be broken up and reduced to a plainer aspect.

The Queen was always very fond of my father, whom, as a matter of fact, she had induced her half-sister (his mother)<sup>1</sup> to send to England after he had run away from school at Dresden. He had always had a deep longing for the sea—I believe, indeed, that his favourite author in those youthful days was Captain Marryat—so the Queen had put him into the Navy in 1848, and the kind old Duchess of Kent had taken a grandmotherly interest in him. Some years after his marriage, moreover, Her Majesty had graciously made him Governor of Windsor Castle—one of those dear old well-paid sinecures which are now being swept away by the spread of a conscientious democracy. But I am straying from my subject; it is not his life that I am writing, but my own.

My father had always been of the strong opinion that a knowledge of foreign languages would be of

<sup>1</sup> The Duchess of Kent, *née* Coburg, Queen Victoria's mother, had married old Prince Leiningen *en premières noces*; and her daughter by him, having married Prince Ernest of Hohenlohe Langenburg, was my father's mother.





LANGENBURG. SCHLOSSGARTEN



THE CASTLE OF LANGENBURG.

great value to a boy in after life, more especially as he intended that after a year or two in the Army I should join the Diplomatic Service. Accordingly he arranged with his brother Hermann that I should go to Langenburg for eighteen months and be educated during that time with my cousin Erni, who was going to have a French tutor; and thus I should soak up both French and German almost unconsciously. It was an excellent arrangement, and I have always been grateful for it. In the summer of 1872, therefore, we journeyed again to Langenburg, and on my people's departure thence I was left behind—feeling rather strange, perhaps, but with a joyful anticipation of pleasures to come; for the huge and ancient castle was a delightful place, full of mysterious dungeons and towers and secret chambers and recesses in the roofs which promised glorious adventures. The country was charming, with the little Jaxt river running in the valley below, giving promise of fishing and swimming, and skating in the winter, whilst the stables were full of horses and ponies. One of the latter (a hard-mouthed little beast—as I soon found out—called Darling) had already been told off for my essays in horsemanship. (Lord! how often he did kick me off!)

The 'French' tutor was a thin, athletic, young Protestant Swiss from the Canton de Vaud, M. Guignard by name. He was a good teacher, a nice fellow (except that he would try to expose to me the errors of the Anglican Church—which left me quite cold, as I understood not a quarter of what he was driving at) and a terrific walker. He used to take us boys (we were but nine years old, remember) for walks of eight and ten miles and think nothing of it. Nor did we at the time, but I was subsequently told it was most reprehensible. That I leave to the judgment of physical experts; but in any case we were very good friends with him, which, after all, was the main point. (The world is indeed small,

for on my first visit to Canada in 1889 I found him at Ottawa teaching French to the Stanley children.)

German was driven into me by lessons from the Herr Kantor, the schoolmaster of the little town, and the elements of music by a grey-haired old Herr Prezeptor who presided weekly at the organ in the old church. The two winters during which I stayed in Germany we passed—much to our disgust—in my uncle's town house at Karlsruhe; but the remainder of the eighteen months at Langenburg, including a trip to my uncle's chamois valley in the Hinterauthal (Austrian Tirol), are still to me a very pleasant memory.

Then came private school in England; and I wish I could say the same of that. But my three years there were tinged with bitterness by the action of the headmaster, who used, amongst other unpleasant practices, to force us boys to give our words of honour to report to him other boys who were in certain things doing wrong in his eyes. I used to be horribly conscientious in those days; and the conflict involved between my ideas of the sacredness of a word of honour and the disgrace involved in 'telling out of school' was most painful. Of course the master had no earthly right to put us boys in such a predicament; but naturally this view of the matter did not occur to us at the time, and we suffered accordingly.

But though the headmaster was intensely disliked by all of us, I must give him credit for strength of character in dealing with us. One scene stands out in my mind. The school was not far from Epsom, and Wednesday was always a half-holiday. As everybody knows, the Derby is run on a Wednesday. One year (1874) old T——, in order to prevent any of the masters (and by the same token any of the boys) from going to the Derby, gave out that that particular Wednesday (always a half-holiday) was

to be a whole school-day. The deep-seated sense of justice that lies hidden in the hearts of all school-boys—even the smallest—was outraged. We determined to mutiny; and when the school-bell rang at three that afternoon the whole of the boys were found massed in the playing-fields instead of in the classrooms. Without the smallest hesitation out flew old T——, scarlet in the face, clerical coat-tails flying, long driving-whip in hand. And, to our shame be it spoken, he drove us all back to school before him, helter-skelter, lashing out at any boys he could reach, and scribbling down in a notebook as best he could the names of the most prominent rebels. Thereafter Derby Day was always a full school-day.

It was a great cricketing school and produced some fine players, notably the Studds and the Hardinges, some of whom were there with me. Above all do I remember a red-letter day when the Second Ground, of which I was captain, beat the second eleven of the First Ground. Such a thing had never happened before and, much to our pride, we were put on to tackle the First Eleven; but we were beaten. Other contemporaries of mine there were Henry Bentinck, Harry Lawson (now Burnham), Cecil Keith Falconer (killed in South Africa), the Beaumonts and Duncombes, Ian Amory (who subsequently married my cousin, Allee Seymour),<sup>1</sup> Ashley and Cosmo Bevan, the Loders, George Barclay, Ned Baird and many others; but of budding Prime Ministers, or embryo Field-M Marshals, or sucking Lord Chancellors—such as appear in the memoirs of most people—I fear we had none.

Next came three years at Charterhouse, and these I thoroughly enjoyed. Haig-Brown was then in all his glory, and a tremendous respect, indeed admiration, we all had for him. Thunderous in appearance and wielding unchallenged power with strength,

<sup>1</sup> He was killed out hunting in 1931.

wisdom and tact, he was really the kindest-hearted of men, and with deep scholarship combined a delicious sense of humour. He used to write the prologues for the school theatricals, masterly productions brimming over with local allusions cleverly concealed—referring, for instance, in one piece to “our lofty aims” when he was really alluding to one of the actors, Oswald Ames, who even then stood over 6 ft. 4 in.<sup>1</sup>—and his wit in Latin and Greek verses was equally delicate. Nor did anyone ever get the better of him in argument. On one occasion (after my time) he had given Prince Albert (of Schleswig-Holstein, then a boy in his house) a day’s leave to attend a naval review at Portsmouth. Whereupon a cheeky youth demanded an audience with the august Head and asked for leave for the same purpose. It was promptly refused. The youth persisted, saying that if Prince Albert went, why should not he? For a moment the ‘Doctor’ was at a loss for a reason, but he quickly recovered himself. “My dear boy,” he said grimly, but with a twinkle in his eye, “when *your* grandmother is in a position to have a Navy of her own, I shall have much pleasure in giving you permission to see it reviewed.”

Only five years before my arrival there the school had been transferred (1872) from its ancient quarters in London to Godalming, and I much appreciated the freedom, the beautiful country and the irresponsibility as compared with the life at my private school, where, during the last year of my stay, I had been head monitor. We had monitors, too, at Charterhouse, but the system was radically different. For here we were not subjected to the petty prying of masters, and especially of the headmaster in list-soles creeping round the corner to detect us in our numerous peccadilloes, which was such a feature of

<sup>1</sup> Ames was subsequently selected to lead Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee procession, being then a Captain in the 2nd Life Guards.

my private school and which led to tricks, lying and other evasive methods on the part of us youngsters. Here at Charterhouse the masters left us alone out of school, and discipline was administered and order kept by the monitors and 'uppers' alone. And the discipline was pretty severe; a 'cocking-up,' indeed, administered by the head monitor of the house with a tough ash plant, the culprit being spread-eagled over a form, hurt much more than a swishing.

At Association football—the horrible word 'Soccer' had not at that period been invented—the school was even then, I think I may say, *facile princeps*. In my day we had Jock Prinsep (who played for England whilst still at school), E. P. Hull, E. F. Growse, the two Walterses, the wonderfully brilliant W. N. Cobbold, and many others who subsequently kept high the name of the school in Old Carthusian and Corinthian annals. Football was compulsory—a very good thing, too, for it kept youngsters away from the sock-shop—and we all loved it. But we also shone at racquets and at shooting, and, if only other public schools had had it too, we should have shone at lawn tennis; for we had three good asphalt courts there, even in 1877, when the game was little played: it had, indeed, been only invented three years before. Fives was not so popular, although personally I liked it much and played for my house.

The curriculum (I believe that is the right word) of the school was the usual classical one, with the exception that we had a 'Woolwich Form' (or Army Class) for those going into the Army. Speaking for myself, although I reached the Under Sixth, I always hated classics, and never could see why one should spend so many hundred hours of one's best learning time in acquiring a knowledge of dead languages and a capacity for writing 'elegant' Latin prose and 'polished' elegiacs, and those horrible and useless things called Greek iambics. 'Mental gym-



nastics,' of course, I shall be told. But why in the name of common-sense not perform your cerebral evolutions in something that shall be useful to you hereafter? Surely there is plenty of scope in English literature and history, astronomy and geography, not to mention half a dozen foreign languages? If you want to exercise your brain on something tough, why not try Arabic or Chinese? For these are strictly classical languages, and very much alive into the bargain—and may be very useful to you hereafter. Yet we were never even taught how to write English properly; our history was almost exclusively confined to a study of the Punic and Peloponnesian wars; of astronomy there was none; and geography—one of the most important subjects for a member of the British Empire—we were supposed to know by instinct.

I can well remember my classical master<sup>1</sup> announcing to me that I had won a Senior Scholarship, adding in tones of the deepest disgust, "You won it entirely by your French and German; your classical papers were beneath contempt!" I rejoined that I was delighted to hear it; and our relations were strained from that day forward.

Mathematics formed the only extra-classical subject of which we had a proper dose; it was well taught, and was useful in after life. But as regards the few school-hours devoted to other than classical subjects, I felt like a horse who is given nothing to eat but the driest of oats, oats, oats, and has, at rare intervals only, a handful of fresh green fodder thrown into his manger.

Charterhouse was never a very 'military' school, in spite of its excellent rifle-shooting and its Rifle Corps—which, by the way, wore a very dark green uniform and cap painfully like that of telegraph boys. I believe Havelock was an old Carthusian, and Baden-Powell ('B. P.' of Boy Scout fame) was

<sup>1</sup> C. C. Tancock, later Head of Tonbridge School.

another well-known soldier. But although the school sent over 3700 of its past members to the Great War and lost 645 killed and over 900 wounded, not many of them<sup>1</sup> rose to pre-eminent distinction in the soldiering line. In the Law, the Church and Medicine, however, we always did well. Ernest Pollock<sup>2</sup> was head monitor of Saunderites (the Head's House) when I was in it, and kept admirable discipline. His brother Bertram, an abnormally clever youth, suddenly developed a wonderful turn of speed in the quarter and hundred, and was expected to go down to posterity as a notable sprinter. But he turned aside from his manifest destiny and became a Bishop<sup>3</sup> instead. Philip Waggett (now the well-known Father Waggett) and his brother, the noted surgeon, were in the house with me; and among other contemporaries, many of whom have come to the fore in various lines, were W. F. Norris (now Dean of Westminster), E. G. Colvin (India), (Sir) Laurence Guillemard (Treasury and Straits Settlements), Cyril Maude and Aubrey Smith, the well-known actors,<sup>4</sup> Wilson Fox, Alan Mackinnon, (Sir) F. Head (M.D., &c.), G. H. Boisragon (V.C.), (Canon) H. K. Southwell, Derek Keppel, Bill Cavendish, Frank Erskine, and many other old friends.

<sup>1</sup> Except perhaps Generals Dobell (of Cameroons fame), R. G. Broadwood (of the Sudan, South Africa and China), J. J. Asser, C. B. Money, A. Hull, H. H. Morant and W. Peake.

<sup>2</sup> Now Lord Hanworth, Master of the Rolls.

<sup>3</sup> Of Norwich.

<sup>4</sup> Forbes-Robertson is also an old Carthusian, but was before my time.

## CHAPTER II.

## SANDHURST : THE GRENADIERS.

IN the spring of 1880 I passed direct out of Charterhouse into Sandhurst, and spent a happy year there before joining my regiment. Many of the cadets had left school a year or two before they went to Sandhurst, and some of them had acquired customs in the interval which to me were more surprising than profitable. There was a good deal of drunkenness in those days, and among a certain set it used to be the correct thing to return from their Saturday and Sunday leave in a somewhat advanced stage of intoxication. But the official eye was leniently shut to these excesses, and I never heard of anyone getting into serious trouble over them. It was not long after the period when the system had been in force that fellows were gazetted straight into regiments and *then* sent to Sandhurst as full-fledged subalterns to do a year's training ; and perhaps the memory of that time, when discipline was not too severely enforced, prevailed.

Those happy days were now over, and only the tradition remained of the glorious liberty that those subalterns had enjoyed and of the pranks they used to play. More especially was the story current of how during Ascot week the Governor, in order to stop them from going to the races, ordered special drills by the N.C.O.'s morning and afternoon, which every subaltern had to attend. This was speedily set at

naught by the subalterns placing all the N.C.O.'s under arrest—and the whole crowd went off to Ascot. But there was serious trouble over this, and the ringleaders forfeited a year's seniority for their amusement.

General Napier was in those days our Governor, a dear old gentleman with bushy white whiskers and moustache, much too gentle a personality to deal with our rough lot; but he was most efficiently supported by the Commandant, Colonel (afterwards General Sir F.) Middleton, a kind-hearted but explosive disciplinarian with a huge moustache. He always became much excited at the annual inspections by the Duke of Cambridge, and used to race about giving contradictory orders at the top of his voice. At the final inspection of my year, on a frightfully hot day, I remember, he reduced himself to such a state of exhaustion that he lost his voice completely; and the Duke was afterwards heard gently to remark to his staff that the inspection was consequently the most satisfactory one that he ever remembered.

The adjutant, Captain Davies, a good little fat red-faced 'ranker,' was also quite efficient, but he used to get his leg pulled, even on parade, and was treated by many of the cadets, I regret to say, with some derision. But it was partly his own fault, and it took him a long time to live down one of his efforts on parade, when, in order to demonstrate the method of smartly coming down to the kneeling firing position, he sank down himself, smartly, on to one heel.<sup>1</sup>

Many of those days will remember Captain Brooke, the riding-master. A gentleman by birth, with dyed whiskers and elaborately curled and waxed moustache, he had got through at least two fortunes, and was trying in his old age to make both ends meet in a billet usually reserved for the higher type

<sup>1</sup> Adjutants, of course, wear spurs.

of 'ranker.' A beautiful rider, mounted always on a hot little chestnut mare, and caracoling and curveting about the school till he nearly drove the old 'hairy-bellies' frantic, he would fling the most savage and the coarsest of oaths at the unhappy cadets bumping round the tan. Sometimes his remarks were extremely funny, though quite unprintable. But there was no real fun in the man; you could see that in his evil scowling face, and we all hated him. Even his brother officers gave him a wide berth.

We were a cheerful lot in our Mess. Particularly do I remember one P. R——, who had spent two years at a German University, an athletic but foul-mouthed and hard-drinking brute, who later distinguished himself by running away, *twice*, with his C.O.'s wife; W——, a quiet-looking fellow, whose strong point was atheism; Loftus Tottenham, a big rowdy Irishman, who was the very devil in a bear-fight; Ewart,<sup>1</sup> always a great friend of mine, with whom, oddly enough—for he went into the Cameron Highlanders—I did a great deal of soldiering (on active service) and staff work in after life; and Macfarlane, a tall Scotsman, who was the only one who managed to keep the lot in any sort of order. There were plenty of good fellows too; but altogether the life, though I enjoyed it, was a revelation to one who was the youngest cadet there and had come straight from school. My particular friend, F. H——, a most gifted and amusing youth of Hebrew extraction, was very popular in the mess, and it was not till I left that I found that he had stolen £3 off me! Later in life he went absolutely to the bad; he was kicked out of his regiment, was strongly suspected of engineering the death of a rich friend after persuading him to leave him a lot of money, and was sentenced at least twice to imprisonment for fraud and stealing jewellery.

<sup>1</sup> Late Lieut.-General Sir Spencer Ewart, commanding in Scotland, died 1930.

I trust I have not conveyed the impression that all the cadets of those days were blackguards ; they were not, and for every black sheep there were at least twenty white ones. But I am merely putting down my broad impressions of the time, and I own that the few ruffians that I met at Sandhurst loom more vividly in my memory than all the other excellent fellows put together. But I cannot remember that any of my contemporaries there, except Allenby and dear old Jack Cowans, ever came to any great fame in their profession thereafter.

I joined the 1st Battalion Grenadiers at Chelsea in October 1881. What shall I say about my life then and for the next three years ? It was the usual routine, coupled with plenty of amusement, of a young subaltern in London. We did not work so hard in those days as the soldiers of to-day. Adjutant's field-days in the Park, plenty of drill in the mornings, 'small reports,' lots of guards and picquets, courts-martial, a weekly 'shirt-smelling,'<sup>1</sup> and an occasional C.O.'s parade or field-day made up the sum of it. There was no training of the men as we understand it now, nor lectures to them, except for a few weeks in the summer at Aldershot or Pirbright (which included some rather perfunctory musketry), and we thought ourselves badly used if (except on guard days) we did not find ourselves free every day by luncheon-time. As for leave, commanding officers and seconds-in-command expected at least six months' leave in the year, and sometimes got eight ! The four months between the middle of March and the middle of July constituted the 'drill season,' and was the only time when we were all present with the battalion and really thoroughly worked. Even then it was nothing very serious, though the discipline was always jolly good ;

<sup>1</sup> Inspection of kits.

and we prided ourselves, with justice, on being the smartest battalion in the Army.

The junior subaltern of a battalion, however, was not so blessed in his leave as the senior officers. As far as I was concerned, I got no leave at all between 1881 and 1885, except, I own, a month which I wangled out of a brother subaltern in full (but unfulfilled) expectation of being able to pay him back; and this I spent in chamois-shooting in the Tirol. Duty on Queen's Guard, or 'Buck House,'<sup>1</sup> or the Tylt Guard (at the present Horse Guards, Whitehall) or Bank, occupied most of my time in those days. And it was not an uncommon thing, during the leave season, to find oneself breakfasting on Guard every day for a week or ten days at a time—on one day, off the next, on the next, and so on.

Although rather irksome, these Guards were not very strenuous. We paraded in barracks at 10.10 (Chelsea Barracks) or 10.30 (Wellington Barracks), marched on Guard, relieved the Guard coming off, and then had an excellent and enormous breakfast at a grateful country's expense. Thereafter there was nothing to do for the rest of the day till dinner-time (we had no luncheon—we were too full) except to inspect a couple of reliefs of sentries and march them off. In those days we did not even have to go round the sentries and hear them their orders. Until we adjourned to the Guards' Club between four and seven, we filled in the time either by reading and writing or by various games, such as air-gun shooting (with darts), dominoes or shove-ha'penny, at which last pastime we were peculiarly efficient. (I never heard of anyone playing this game except on Guard, where it was a relic of the distant past.) Subalterns' courts-martial were also sometimes held, with dire results to the culprit. Our creature comforts were looked after by the head waiter, Paul Leroy, a Frenchman who had

<sup>1</sup> Buckingham Palace.

fought in the Franco-German War, and who, in addition to his talents in waitering, used to fill us up with all the latest tips and racing gossip. Excellent man, he only retired in 1922 after forty-seven years' faithful service.<sup>1</sup>

There was also a first-rate dinner (again at the public expense) for ten people—*i.e.*, the five officers on Guard, the two 'tin-belly' officers from the Whitehall mounted Guard, and three others—Gold Stick, Silver Stick and Field Officer in Brigade waiting. The last three hardly ever came, and their places were taken by the guests of the Captain of the Guard or of other officers. Extra guests had to be paid for, fifteen shillings a nob. After dinner, which was always a cheery feast washed down by excellent Pol Roger or Dagonet (alas! no more), we at once adjourned to cards. The play was generally pretty high, or it would be considered so nowadays. Whist was supposed to be *de rigueur*, but as a matter of fact it was generally nap, poker, loo, or baccarat. In 'Bully' Oliphant's time he used to get some fairly stiff gamblers together, and it was nothing unusual for fellows to bet £25 on the turn of a card or to win or lose £200 or more a night. Captains were, however, always careful to prevent their subalterns from playing for more than they could afford, and the high players were generally civilians. (But all the same I remember myself, with the usual beginner's luck, winning £78 at loo the very first time I played—and I did not drop much of it subsequently.) As time went on, however, this gambling reached the ears of the higher authorities, and peremptory orders came down limiting the games to whist and nap at very modest stakes indeed.

Everyone was turned out at 10.55 P.M.; the officers went to their different Guards, and the Captain went 'Grand Rounds' in state, preceded by a minute drummer carrying an enormous lantern,

<sup>1</sup> He died in 1930.



and followed by the sergeant of the Guard and a file of men. The Lieutenant went his rounds at 1 A.M. and the Ensign at 3, with much the same escort, except that the sentries only 'shouldered' to them, whilst they 'presented' to the Captain. (It always struck me as being rather comic that out of all the hundreds of people that passed them during their two hours of sentry-go the *only* ones that they challenged with a "Halt—who-comes-there?" were the *only* ones that they knew; but such were the orders.) Lord! how sleepy one did get before 3 A.M.! It used in the early days to be an understood thing that the Lieutenant kept the Ensign company till that hour, playing cards or yarning; but gradually it fell into disuse—and no wonder. All the same, I remember many heart-to-heart talks with certain Lieutenants in the midnight hours<sup>1</sup>—confidences and breast searchings alike, varied by terrific bouts of single poker or picquet; I wonder if the same thing happens nowadays.

When I joined, 'Old Joey' Davies commanded the battalion, with Cis Ricardo as his very smart adjutant. Colonel Clive commanded the regiment, and Major-General Higginson<sup>2</sup> (whom we were all delighted to welcome at the Regimental Dinner of 1926 at the great age of ninety-nine years and eleven months) the Home District. Several of the senior officers in the Brigade had seen service in the Crimea, but there had been small opportunity since then of taking part in any campaigns, though a few, who had devoted their leave to getting a taste of active service, sported medals gained in Ashanti or Zululand, or on the Indian frontier.

But these things were to change for the better.

<sup>1</sup> Cis Fane, Joe Drummond, the 'Ghost' (J. Warrender) and the 'Boy' (Anderton), among others.

<sup>2</sup> General Sir G. H. had been adjutant of the 3rd Battalion at the battle of the Alma and throughout the Crimea. He died in January 1927 at the age of well over a hundred.

The Egyptian campaign of 1882 took place and, much to our surprise and delight, three battalions of the Brigade were formed into a Brigade under the Duke of Connaught, and, in addition to a composite 'tin-belly' regiment, were sent out. Our battalions saw little actual fighting, for they were in reserve at Tel-el-Kebir and their services were not required in that action, though poor 'Bertie' Balfour and Colour-Sergeant Holmes of our 2nd Battalion were killed by a couple of long-range bullets which missed the foremost ranks. But though the campaign was very short and there were very few losses in the Brigade, the battalions on their return were received as great heroes. I personally was very jealous of George Macdonald, who, joining the 1st Battalion from Sandhurst on the same day as myself, but junior to me, had been taken as the junior subaltern to fill a gap in the 2nd Battalion, and consequently soon afterwards sported two medals when I had none. But my time was to come.

In those days we used to change quarters in London and Windsor every six months. I cannot conceive what the object of these perpetual changes was, and it must have cost the country a nice little bit of money; but I suppose it was a relic of the past. We shifted about, therefore, between Chelsea and Wellington Barracks and the Tower (no Underground Railway then beyond the Mansion House) and Windsor with startling rapidity, and occasionally put in a year in Dublin, which was one of our regular stations. A strange old custom there was, too, in the shape of 'Muster' twice a year. The whole battalion had to parade and march individually past a 'Muster-Master'—a faded old individual in a nondescript uniform who turned up on these occasions from the Lord knows where. Every man had to answer to his name, from the C.O. to the last-joined tailor-boy. In the old days no doubt

this was very necessary, when the C.O.'s used personally to draw pay for their men on unchecked lists and clothe them by private arrangement; and the appalling frauds which used to take place in William and Anne's times, and even among the Georges, were no doubt gradually checked by 'Muster.' But why this crusted old arrangement should still go on when all pay and clothing administration was done by special officials, and checked and counter-checked, and audited and counter-audited *ad nauseam*, I do not know; perhaps they were waiting for the last old Muster-Master to die. If so, he must have given up the ghost about 1883.

In the summer of 1884 the battalion went to Dublin—*viâ* Holyhead and the old tub H.M.S. *Assistance*, a troopship which ought to have been scrapped twenty years before. I was luckily always an excellent sailor, but the rest of the battalion were shockingly ill, for it certainly *was* rough, and I had to do duty for several subalterns besides myself. We liked our quarters in Richmond Barracks, and started amongst other things a battalion yacht, H.M.S. *Squirt*, of some ten tons, in which Charlie Fergusson<sup>1</sup> and myself on one occasion very nearly got drowned, for you can have pretty heavy weather even in Dublin Bay. We also proceeded to look out for a horse or two for the winter, and were much amused by the local inhabitants, their brogue and their wit—all gone long ago.

But whilst we were settling down, greater things were happening abroad. Gordon was up in the Sudan, being hemmed in by the Mahdi and his army at Khartoum, and Gladstone was being hammered and badgered into sending up an expedition to relieve him. But he would not give way till the

<sup>1</sup> Lately Governor-General of New Zealand.

very last moment; and then, though men and animals did their very best, they arrived too late. Had Gladstone agreed to the expedition only a fortnight before he did, Gordon's life would in all probability have been saved and the history of the Sudan radically altered.

## CHAPTER III.

THE SUDAN. 1884-85.

THE battalion had not been more than a month in Dublin before orders were issued for the formation of a Guards' Camel Regiment, composed of sections from each of the seven battalions of the Brigade, to be got ready and to be sent out to the Sudan at once. Each section was to consist only of two officers and forty-three men; and great was my delight when I heard that orders had come from the War Office (my excellent uncle and godfather, Wilfred Seymour, happened by a strange coincidence to be Assistant Military Secretary at the War Office at the time) that I was to be the subaltern of the battalion detachment. Things were indeed done differently in those days! Charlie Rowley, one of our majors, was to command, and it was not long before we were under way. The last night, I remember, was spent in a glorious bear-fight after dinner, considerably stimulated by my standing champagne to all the Mess as a thank-offering for my appointment.

A few days afterwards, after a tearing scramble on my part to get a field-kit together, the seven detachments, under the command of Colonel 'Star' Boscawen<sup>1</sup> of the Coldstream, with Charlie Crutchley of the Scots Guards as Adjutant, paraded at Wellington Barracks, proceeded to Portsmouth and em-

<sup>1</sup> Later Lord Falmouth.

barked in the P. & O. *Deccan*. The Heavy (Cavalry) Camel Regiment was also on board, under the command of Colonel Reggie Talbot of the 1st Life Guards, and was inducted during the voyage into the mysteries of the Martini-Henry rifle with long sword-bayonet, which was to replace their usual carbine and heavy sword. But our armament turned out to be most unsatisfactory, and cost the lives of many good men. For in our subsequent desert fighting the sand got into the rolled, not solid-drawn, cartridge-case, and caused a number of deaths by jamming it in the chamber; and the bayonets—which by the way were issued unsharpened, with no grindstones to sharpen them—in several cases bent when it came to hand-to-hand fighting. What the feelings of a poor fellow must have been, trying to stand up to charging dervishes with a jammed cartridge-case in the breech and a bent bayonet on the muzzle of his rifle, had better not be imagined.<sup>1</sup>

Clad in their light-grey tunics, cartridge bandoliers over the shoulder, Bedford cord breeches, blue putties, brown lace boots, spurs, white helmets (subsequently stained brown with tea), carrying no kit but a haversack and a water-bottle and, finally, adorned with puggaree and blue goggles, our men certainly presented a somewhat different appearance from their comrades on Queen's Guard—especially later on when nearly everyone grew a beard. Red tunics we took with us in our kit-bags, but practically never wore; and more useful were the blue jerseys and fisherman's caps with which we were served out for the voyage and took up-country with us.

We landed at Alexandria on 7th October 1884, and, after a week's camp at the Pyramids, were sent up-stream to Wadi Halfa by train and steamer. There we made the acquaintance of our future steeds, and in an extraordinarily short time the men

<sup>1</sup> There was, very rightly, a terrific row about this afterwards.

were on excellent terms with their camels and riding them with the greatest ease. We were lucky in forming the advanced party (detachments from the 1st Grenadiers, 1st Coldstream and 1st Scots), as not only did we get ahead quicker, but we got the pick of the camels. Concerning these beasts, perhaps I may be allowed to quote from something I wrote<sup>1</sup> about that time:—

“The men were highly delighted with their first mount, and proceeded to trot and canter their steeds all over the plain, although a camel’s anatomy is not constructed for the purpose of cantering; many were the croppers they came, especially when getting up, but it only made them the keener. Mounting a frisky camel is exciting work for the beginner, and nearly always results in a cropper. The mode of procedure should be thus: having made your camel to kneel by clearing your throat loudly at him and tugging at his rope, shorten your rein till you bring his head round to his shoulder, put your foot in the stirrup and throw your leg over. With his head jammed like that he cannot rise, and must wait till you give him his head. Unless you do as directed, he will get up before your leg is over; if this happens, stand in the stirrup till he is up, and *then* throw your leg over, otherwise you will infallibly meet with a hideous catastrophe. We found that with the rifle in the bucket it was impossible to get one’s leg over, so always made the men pass the sling of the rifle over their left wrists before getting on. After a time we found it easier to stand alongside and give a big heave of the right leg over the saddle without touching the near stirrup at all. So much for mounting; dismounting is, of course, the same reversed.”

I might add that being run away with on your camel at a hard trot—as several times happened to me—is a most alarming experience, for you feel so

<sup>1</sup> ‘With the Camel Corps up the Nile.’ (Chapman & Hall, 1888.)

utterly helpless. You haul away at his rope-rein till his head comes right back to your pommel—but his body still goes on! The only way to stop him is to haul him round in large circles until he stops from sheer exhaustion.

On the stony places I really pitied the podgy soft-looking feet of the camels, but they knocked their toes against the sharp stones with the greatest unconcern. I also once had practical experience that their feet are not soft by a violent kick I received from the hind-leg of a camel, who thought himself insulted by my examining his head-stall in the dark. A camel's hind-legs will reach anywhere—over his head, round his chest and on to his hump; even when lying down an evilly-disposed animal will shoot out his legs and bring you to a sitting posture. His neck is of the same pliancy. He will chew the root of his tail, nip you in the calf, or lay the top of his head on his hump. He also bellows and roars at you, whatever you are doing—saddling him, feeding him, mounting him, unsaddling him. To the uninitiated, a camel going for one with his mouth open and gurgling horribly is a terrifying spectacle; but do not mind him, it is only his way. He hardly ever bites, but when he does you feel it for some time; as a matter of fact, we only once had a man laid up from a bite in the hand, but he had to go into hospital for it. I heard of one or two men having a leg broken from a kick at various times, but it was the exception and not the rule, for a camel is really a very docile animal, and learns to behave himself in the most trying positions with equanimity, though I fear it is only the result of want of brains.

Regarding his wonderful powers of endurance, I was told of journeys made across country from Dongola to Alexandria (950 miles) in eight days; of his marvellous powers of going for forty days running; of trotting 200 miles without a halt; of



his going fifteen days without water, &c. My experience is that he gets a sore back after four days or less, does not go comfortably for more than five consecutive days; and as for trotting, it was only by a vigorous application of the *kurbash* that I could succeed in making mine go that pace for more than fifty yards at a time. I own that, though my first impression of a camel's powers were thus bad, and I do not now believe in those wonderful tales told me by wily natives, yet the beast rose wonderfully in my estimation some time afterwards, when we were in the thick of 'real business' in the Bayuda Desert, on seeing the patient way in which our poor camels walked on and on, with no food or water whatever inside them, till they dropped dead in their tracks.

When we arrived at our halting-place we used to form column of companies, dismounting by word of command, and tether our steeds to a long cable rope brought with us for the purpose. The men then fed the camels, took their saddles off when cool, cooked and ate their own dinner, and watered the camels at the river every other day. Five pounds of grain was our steed's allowance at the evening meal, the other five pounds being given them in the early morning, half an hour before starting. Great care had to be taken with the camels, as they are really delicate animals, and had all sorts of unknown ailments if carelessly looked after. When taken down to the river some camels would look aimlessly about, exhausting the patience of the man by not drinking for ten minutes or more, and sometimes not drinking at all if the least jostled. They used to get colds in their noses, too, at night, especially the flank ones. Sometimes they caught cold if the saddles were removed too soon; sometimes also they fought in the lines, and got their ropes into fearful confusion. They used to break away at times and wander all over the

lines, causing great sorrow to their riders, who came to seek them, and they were not. Besides this, on the march a camel would occasionally go slower and slower, and at last kneel down without warning, refusing to get up. No examination would discover the seat of the sickness or injury (if any), so he was whacked till he did go on. Altogether they were a sad trouble.

As things turned out, I really believe that we should have done better had we marched on foot the whole way—at all events after reaching Korti—and used our camels as extra baggage animals. The original idea had been that the camels would carry us faster than we could walk across the sands of the desert. But as a matter of fact there were no sands to speak of—it was all excellent hard going ; and the delay of a week at Gakdul,<sup>1</sup> caused by a serious shortage of camels for bringing up stores, and necessitating our riding-camels being sent back to Korti to bring up supplies, was fatal. Had we had enough camels to take us and our stores straight across the Bayuda Desert, we should have got to Metemmeh before the Mahdi's hordes arrived ; we should have had no fighting at Abu Klea and Abu Kru ; and although no doubt we should have had serious fighting before getting to Khartoum, the probabilities are that, with the Nile on our left flank, we should have got through and rescued Gordon in the nick of time. Against this theory, however, is the opinion of some well-informed people that the Mahdi could have taken Khartoum a week earlier than he did ; the pros and cons of the question are in any case of interest. I am, however, going ahead too fast.

We pushed along the east bank of the river from Halfa, and halted opposite Dongola, where we found Lord Wolseley. Full of energy, he came trotting out to our camp to see us ; but it unfortunately

<sup>1</sup> Two-thirds of the way across the Bayuda Desert.

happened to be feeding-time for our steeds, and his Lordship's camel was hungry. He made a sudden swerve at a heap of our *dhura* (millet), and the G.O.C. 'continued the motion,' taking a heavy toss on to his shoulder. To us it appeared the best joke in the world, but not till afterwards did we hear that he really was rather severely hurt.

As smallpox was raging in Dongola, we crossed the river twenty miles farther up and went into camp for nine days at Shabadud, some twenty miles farther. Here I made the acquaintance of Captain Sir W—— B——, a brilliantly energetic officer, but of unfortunate temper, especially with natives. He and I were walking back from the village one evening when a well-meaning Arab called out to us "Leilat ak saida!" (Good evening!). "I'll teach the beggar to shout at a British officer!" exclaimed B——. He drew his revolver and rushed at the native in spite of my protests. Luckily the man went to ground in a friendly hut—but otherwise there might have been trouble. Some nights afterwards, being on the opposite bank of the river and wishing to get back to camp, he attracted our attention by firing his rifle into it repeatedly. That certainly led to trouble. Eventually, poor fellow, he was killed by his own natives on the Congo in Stanley's relief expedition, a fate that had been prophesied for him more than once.

It was at Kurot that we first came across Kitchener, then a Major in the Intelligence Department. He had been sent ahead with some troops, mostly Bashi-bozuku, belonging to the Mudir of Dongola, and was busily collecting information about the enemy. I remember well my first sight of him—a tall spare man with a fair pointed beard and wonderfully piercing grey eyes, dressed in a khaki jacket and trousers, which had shrunk very severely in the wash. He looked suspiciously at us, and did not seem at all glad to see us; but at luncheon he thawed a good

deal, and though we never could get very much out of him, we became excellent friends, and he was made honorary member of our Mess. He lived with us until we reached Gakdul; but there, much to his disgust, he was sent back to headquarters at Korti in order to palaver with the tribes and collect camels and supplies. So he was out of all the desert fighting that ensued.

On the 14th December we arrived at Korti, the village in the bend of the Nile whence, as it turned out, we were to start on our desert march across the Bayuda. We had been joined at Shabadud by the rest of the Guards' Camel Regiment; and at Korti we received a very welcome addition in the shape of a detachment, a hundred strong, of Royal Marines, who were to form our fourth company. Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Poë commanded them, with W. Pearson as Captain, and C. V. Townshend (later of Egyptian Army and Kut<sup>1</sup> fame) and H. S. N. White as subalterns; and a jolly good lot they were. Troops trickled in day by day, and by the end of the year the desert and river columns were ready to start.

On the 30th December we moved off. Gordon was, in spite of his cheery message, "Could hold out for years," in desperate difficulties, and every day, every minute, was of value. We—that is, a squadron of the 19th Hussars, the Mounted Infantry Camel Regiment, and ourselves, and a huge train of baggage-camels, the whole under the command of Brigadier-General Sir Herbert Stewart—proceeded to cross the hundred miles of desert to Gakdul wells, and did so practically without incident. The M.I. were dropped to garrison Abu Halfa wells, and we held the rocky pools of Gakdul, whilst the baggage-camels and our own riding-camels were sent back to bring up more stores.

That was on the 3rd January, and it was not till

<sup>1</sup> Qut el Amara, Mesopotamia.

the 13th that, heavily reinforced, the column of about 1500 men<sup>1</sup> and 2200 camels moved off for the great adventure.

What followed is by now ancient history. Our approach to Abu Klea<sup>2</sup> wells on the 16th was blocked by masses of Arabs—some eleven thousand of them, as we found out afterwards; and on the morning of the 17th, leaving our baggage and camels in a zeriba, we moved out in fighting square to tackle them.

After moving slowly for about an hour under a heavy fire over terribly broken ground, which played havoc with the formation, especially of the rear, of the square—for the camels inside, carrying a few stores and cacolets for the wounded, could not keep up—vast masses of Arabs suddenly arose from a hollow on our left flank and charged down on the rear of the square. My C.O., Rowley, behaved very gallantly here in dragging some camels with wounded, which had been left outside, into the square, just in time, and then the enemy were on us. With flags flying, and yelling as they came, thousands of spearmen poured down upon the Heavies and Naval Brigade at the broken left rear corner.

The moment our skirmishers were in a terrific fire began from the left and rear faces upon the Arabs, volleys rapidly merging into independent firing. I was with my company on the right front, and anxiously my men looked for something beyond a stray skirmishing nigger to shoot at. The camels inside the square obstructed all vision to the fighting flank, and we had already concluded that the fire of the Heavies and Mounted Infantry had swept back the Arabs, when suddenly a terrific shock was felt, accompanied by redoubled yells and firing. I

<sup>1</sup> Naval Detachment, 3 troops 19th Hussars, Heavy, Guards and M.I. Camel Regiments (each about 370 strong), 100 of the Sussex Regiment, R.A., R.E., Supply and Medical Detachments, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, Abu Tleh (a particular sort of desert grass).

found myself lifted off my legs amongst a surging mass of Heavies and Sussex, who had been carried back against the camels by the impetuous rush of the enemy. Telling the men to stand fast, I forced my way through the jam to see what had happened. Heavies, Sussex, and camels of all sorts were pressing with terrific force on our thin double rank, and it seemed every moment as if it must give; but it did not.

On getting through to the other side of the press, a gruesome sight was seen. Immediately in front were swarms of Arabs, in desperate hand-to-hand fight with our men, hacking, hewing, hamstringing, and yelling like a crowd of black devils on a ground literally piled up with dead and dying. On the right the Mounted Infantry were pouring in their fire with deadly effect, the enemy falling in hundreds. At my side Dr Briggs, minus his helmet, his patients all killed or scattered, had drawn his sword, and was frantically endeavouring to rally the men near him. I shouted myself hoarse, trying to get the men to aim carefully, but my voice was lost in the din. A rain of bullets whizzed dangerously close past my head from the rifles behind into the fighting mass in front. Numbers of the Arabs went down in that hail, and I fear several Englishmen too. Everything depended on the front and right faces standing fast. And well did they stick to it. With the rear rank faced about, the men stubbornly withstood the pressure, and, do what they would, the Arabs could not break in the solid mass of men and camels.

It was too hot to last. At length the enemy, almost annihilated, wavered, turned and retreated sullenly, our men shooting them down in scores till they disappeared out of range over the hill-tops. Many of these brave fanatics turned and charged the square singly, being, of course, shot down long before they reached it. When we saw the Arabs

in full retreat, the General give the word, and we raised cheer after cheer—a little attention evidently not appreciated by the enemy, many of whom turned and shook their fists at us. Oh! that we could have wheeled the front face up on the right of the Mounted Infantry and slated them a bit more! Hardly one of the enemy would have escaped.

It was an awful slaughter. On the knoll immediately outside the square lay the bodies of eighty-six Englishmen, wax-like in death and covered with dust and blood. Hardly a square foot but was hidden by the stiffening carcasses of men and camels: here Burnaby's corpse, the head nearly severed from the body; there Carmichael's, a bullet hole through the face and a gaping spear wound in the neck—it was horrible.

Nine officers killed and nine wounded, chiefly among the Heavies, with whom we had come out and whom we knew so well, made a fearful gap amongst our friends. Burnaby, Gough (of the Royals), Wolfe, Carmichael, Law, Atherton, Darley, Piggott and De Lisle,<sup>1</sup> all killed! St Vincent not expected to live; and seven or eight others, equally well known to us, wounded!

Dead Arabs in hundreds strewed the ground, mostly with a fiendish expression on their still faces. Here and there the Mahdi's uniform and straw cap proclaimed one of superior rank; but the greater part by far were clad in (originally) white garments, wound round the waist and fastened over the left shoulder—the shaven head crowned with a white cotton skull-cap. In some cases their clothes had caught fire from the nearness of the discharge of the rifles, and several of the heaps of bodies were smouldering. Arms of all sorts and broken banner staves were scattered over the field; spears in hundreds, some of enormous length, javelins, knob-

<sup>1</sup> These last two sailors.

kerries, hatchets, swords and knives, but no shields of any sort; for the Mahdi, knowing their uselessness against bullets, had ordered them to be left at home, in order to give greater freedom for using the other weapons.

The men were now suffering greatly from thirst, yet there was hardly a drop to give them, nearly all the spare water being used for the wounded. Several men fainted, and many more suffered acutely, their lips turning black, and their tongues swelling so as to cause great pain. It was high time to push on to the wells, so the word was given, and the square moved slowly on—very slowly—in order to allow the camels and wounded to keep up: 106 wounded was far too large a number to be carried on the few camels we had left—who, indeed, were required for medical stores and ammunition; so my company, as being the strongest, was told off to carry them on stretchers. The men were fearfully weak themselves through fatigue and thirst, but stuck to their burdens manfully all the time.

It was some time before the 19th Hussars found the wells, and when at last we reached them, the water, though sweet, was thick with yellow mud. But even so, we owed our lives to it, for not a drop of water was left in our bottles or water-skins, and we were all getting weak with thirst.

By this time it was six o'clock; so whilst a number of volunteers were sent back to bring up the baggage and camels from the zeriba, the rest of us spent a desperately cold night in our thin clothes in trying to get some sleep—with but little success.

On the following afternoon we started on our twenty-six mile march to the Nile, hoping to reach it before dawn so as to avoid another fight for water. But it was not to be.

The confusion of that night march was awful.



Personally I was in charge of the baggage of the G.C.R., and the remembrance of the appalling tangle of the whole column in the dark and the impossibility of keeping men or camels together, or even of keeping them marching straight, combines with the night march after Le Cateau in 1914 to haunt me even now in my dreams. I felt in a horribly responsible position; for if I lost not only our fourteen baggage- but also our seven water-camels, the thought preyed upon me that the whole regiment would die of inanition and thirst. Whole camel-loads fell off; the camels fell down or insisted on walking round and round in a ring; I did not know enough Arabic (let alone Hindustani) to cope with the drivers; my camels, escort and natives drifted apart and got lost in the blurry mass of the column; and as dead silence had been ordered, I could not shout or bugle them together. Altogether I was in a nice mess. Had I been older, I should no doubt have realised that all other units were in a like predicament; but as it was, I remained in a state of abject misery all that night. Meanwhile everybody went bungling on, all formation lost—at all events in the baggage portion—with sometimes the advanced-guard in front and sometimes the rear-guard. At one period indeed we crashed through a mimosa forest, which was never located afterwards.

All nightmares, however, have an end; and when daylight at last appeared we drifted together again somehow. But the Nile was not even in sight! Meanwhile an occasional bullet over or into us warned us that the enemy was on the warpath again, and as the light grew stronger, so did the firing.

At last orders came to halt and form a zeriba of stores; and behind this little parapet we sat for many hours, a target for hundreds of snipers from the bushes all round. Men and camels fell fast, and we could do little to keep off the unseen foe. Per-

sonally I had a desperately narrow shave, for as I was sitting on a bully-beef box to get a better view, I was knocked head over heels by a bullet which hit me just over the wind. I lay there gasping, expecting every moment to be my last. To show what curious things one thinks about at supreme moments, a story about the Vicomte de la Rochefoucauld in some fight in La Vendée flashed into my mind, and I particularly remembered the description of how the darkness of death slowly closed over his eyes. But somehow the darkness did not come; as I gradually recovered my wind, I sat up, just in time to hear a sepulchral order from Crabbe, our Acting Quartermaster, "Take him away; he's dead!" Yet no pain and no blood—why? And then I found that the button that had saved my life had been torn away, together with a chain connecting my watch and compass, ripping my tunic open and breaking a small pair of scissors in my breast-pocket! I tried, for the fun of it, to get my name on to the wounded list, but could not produce any blood, except a tiny dot of it in the middle of the bruise, and the doctor said that was not enough!

It was about noon that Sir Herbert Stewart, to the great grief of all, received a bullet in the groin, which eventually proved fatal. The next senior officer, Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, R.E., who, owing to the death of Colonel Burnaby at Abu Klea, found himself in command, was head of the Intelligence and had been intended by Wolseley, if all went well, to communicate personally with Gordon at Khartoum, and, I believe, to insist on his evacuating the town, whether he liked it or not. On him was, most unfairly, I thought, subsequently laid the blame of our not getting to Khartoum in time to rescue Gordon; but of that hereafter.

About three o'clock we at length made a move, formed a square of most of the fighting men, and moved slowly out towards the Nile. By the mercy

of Providence the square attracted the whole of the enemy's attention, and the zeriba of stores, guarded by a very few men under Captain Lord Charles Beresford, R.N., was not attacked. Suffice it to say that a terrific onslaught was made on the square, but from the front this time; and under the withering fire of the Mounted Infantry and ourselves not an Arab got near it. They dropped in hundreds, turned tail and bolted, and the Nile was ours! Dead tired we reached the village of Gubat, a few miles up-stream of Metemmeh (the main garrison of the Dervishes), and after a long, long drink we bivouacked there and passed the night in peace, returning to fetch the rest of the column on the following morning.

Next day we sallied forth to attack Metemmeh; but the attack degenerated into a 'reconnaissance in force,' for the town was much too big to tackle with our small force. During the action four of Gordon's steamers suddenly appeared, manned by his gallant blacks; these welcome allies rapidly rushed their little guns on shore and, greeting us with delighted yells, got into action at once, desperately keen to take Metemmeh. But it was not to be; so we returned to Gubat and formed a small redoubt on the river just below the village, which stood on rising ground a few hundred yards from the Nile.

This was the 21st January, and the next two days were spent by the steamers in cutting wood—there was, of course, no coal—preparatory to taking Sir C. Wilson and an advanced party of Sussex, in red tunics belonging to our men, up to Khartoum. Reports were rife of another force descending the river to attack us, as well as of a second lot advancing on us from Berber; and one of the steamers was sent out to patrol up and down the river. Lord Wolseley subsequently maintained that this delay of two days was fatal to the whole expedition, that

Wilson ought to have started on the 22nd, and that he would thus have been in time to rescue Gordon. Those who maintain the contrary (myself included) point out that Wilson could not have started then, as there was no fuel for the steamers; that, being in command, he could not have pushed off into the blue when Gordon's blacks had informed him that there was a big force close by, just going to attack us; that, even had he been able to start in one steamer on the 22nd with a sufficient supply of fuel, he would, judging by the time he actually took, probably not have got to Khartoun till the late morning of the 26th (Gordon was killed at daybreak on the 26th); and that with the few men he had on board (the decks were so full of logs there was no room for a big detachment), his arrival could not possibly have made any difference, nor even had he been just in time could he have got hold of Gordon, surrounded as the latter was on all sides by the enemy.

The point will, of course, never be cleared up; but my private opinion is that nothing but a miracle would have made any difference; that the Mahdi could have taken the palace whenever he chose, and that he would in any case have done so the moment our steamer was sighted, whilst the few redcoats she carried would have been able to achieve nothing. Two *weeks* earlier would have made a difference, but two *days*—no. The real causes of failure were, first, delay on the part of Mr Gladstone, and second, an insufficient supply of camels.

How Wilson came within sight of Khartoum two days after Gordon's death; how he was received with a terrific fire and steamed away down-stream; how both his steamers were wrecked by treachery; and how he was rescued by 'Charlie' Beresford—all these things belong again to ancient but dramatic history. For us, for all, the object of the expedition had disappeared; and the main question that arose

was, what we were to do next? Here we were, a small body of about eight hundred rifles or less, with a rapidly disappearing baggage train of camels dying of starvation, our stores growing less and less every day, with hordes of the triumphant enemy pouring down upon us from Khartoum, and with no orders and no superior officers to decide what to do, for Wilson had, after his rescue, gone straight back to Korti to report. It was an anxious time for those in charge, but we subalterns did not worry our heads much about it; it was awkward, of course, but *we* were not responsible, and whether we were to bolt for home, or to stay and be carved into mincemeat by the Dervishes, that really was not our affair—we only had to obey orders and do our best. As for our men, they took the whole thing quite calmly, and were much more interested in the subject of sugar or no sugar for their lime juice ration than in the proceedings of Lord Wolseley or the enemy.

A very typical characteristic, I have often thought since, of the British soldier, both officer and man; put your trust in your superior and do not worry—merely obey orders and do your best when the time comes. Meanwhile, carry on as usual.

Yes, but what *were* the orders? Since Sir Herbert left Korti for the second time on the 8th of January we had had no orders of any kind, or even communications, from headquarters at Korti; and it was now—*i.e.*, the day when we heard of the fall of Khartoum—the 1st of February: twenty-four days, including two desperate battles and an appalling catastrophe, without orders or instructions! In these days of rapid communication, even across deserts, it will hardly be believed that no arrangements had been made for keeping headquarters in touch with the fighting column. No, this is hardly correct. A field-telegraph *had* been brought upstream, but it would have taken so many camels

to carry the wire that it was left behind. Signallers with heliographs had been dropped at intervals between Korti and Gakdul; but there were none between Gakdul and Gubat. The country was not hilly enough, and, besides, even if it had been, small signalling-posts dotted at intervals of many miles would in all probability have been scuppered. So we had no orders. Even a convoy we had sent back to Gakdul for more stores, which had returned on the 31st, had brought neither news nor instructions from Lord Wolseley!

A second convoy, under Colonel Reggie Talbot, was sent back to Gakdul on the evening of the 1st February for more stores, and the best of the starved and weary camels were selected for it. The escort was composed of a hundred Grenadiers and Scots Guards, including myself as one of the officers, and I had the honour of being in charge of the rear-guard. Oh, that night! it was nearly as bad as the night march already described! The wretched camels kept dropping, and it was my business to see that no saddles or men were left behind. If the camel was dead, or quite unable to move, his load, if he had one, had to be divided up amongst the others, or, if a riding camel, his late rider had to walk. If, on the other hand, the poor beast had only collapsed through exhaustion, he had to be flogged on to his legs again and driven on. Meanwhile the column had disappeared into the grey moonlight of the desert, and was only to be halted by sound of bugle. And this had to be done very sparingly for fear of bringing stray enemies upon our tracks. The O.C. convoy, I remember, was angry with me for bugling so often, but what was I to do? I did not want to get lost with my rear-guard and strings of 'dicky' camels, and to leave the column without rear protection was unthinkable. So, regardless of the feelings of O.C. convoy, I went on tootling gaily at intervals into the night.

By the time that the sun rose I had left over thirty camels dying on the stony ground; and now both stores and saddles had to be abandoned with the poor moribund animals, for there were no other beasts on which to pack them. In daylight matters improved a bit, and by mid-day we had reached Abu Klea camp, garrisoned by a few of the Sussex. Sick and wounded were cleared out, and before night-fall we had passed the battlefield and got clear of the pass beyond. Hundreds of dead bodies, though hundreds more had been buried, were still lying about the country, dried up and almost mummified by the heat, and the stench was appalling. And stalking about the bodies were big birds in scores: vultures, storks, cranes, marabouts, and even paddy-birds, too gorged to fly away from their loathsome feast.

At Gakdul, where we arrived three days afterwards (5th February), we found General Sir Redvers Buller, who, to our great satisfaction, was to come back to Gubat with us and decide what was to be done. I expected that in this still most critical situation Buller would have every right to be anxious, as the decision regarding the whole course of the expedition would be laid on his shoulders. In passing his tent, therefore, I ventured to peep in, expecting to see him pacing to and fro, his brows furrowed with heavy thought and responsibility. But he was not doing anything of the sort. He was sitting in a fold-up chair, reading 'Punch,' and throwing a joke or two from it to his A.D.C., Henry FitzGerald. I felt marvellously relieved.

By the 11th February we were back at Gubat, and Buller lost no time in making up his mind. Orders were issued to clear out at once, and on the 13th, after throwing over 44,000 lb. of our hardly won stores into the Nile, we turned our backs on the scene of our disappointment for good and all. It was well that we did so, and it was only just in

time; for masses of the enemy were beginning to congregate, and had already attacked our wounded convoy which had left on the day before. Luckily the latter were rescued in the nick of time by the Light Camel Regiment, which turned up most providentially in the middle of the action and escorted the wounded back to Abu Klea.

The retirement from these wells was carried out by sending off the Heavies, 19th Hussars, ourselves and Gordon's Sudanese, accompanied by their miscellaneous families and cooking-pots, whilst Buller remained with the Mounted Infantry, Lights and Royal Irish to hold the wells till we could send them back our camels from Gakdul. Again the situation was difficult owing to want of camels; and the garrison, left planted without any means of transport, was seriously attacked only twelve hours after we left. Luckily they managed to beat off the Dervishes with little loss, and the latter, unable to get at the water, had to fall back on the river, leaving the desert clear for our evacuation.

To cut a long story short, we all got back to Korti without further mishap by the 9th March, and the expedition was distributed along the river for summer quarters, in expectation of a reorganisation and further campaign in the autumn. Meanwhile another expedition—and a futile one at that—had been sent to Suakin with orders to build a railway to Berber. They constructed a few miles in circumstances of great difficulty and, after a few minor fights, fell back on Suakin, where they stayed till June and then went home.

Meanwhile the Guards' Camel Regiment was in camp at Dongola; and here we remained for two and a half very hot months, amusing ourselves as best we could, whilst the Nile was falling every day. Every day also it became more clear that the British taxpayer was not the least inclined to have another autumn expedition. The country was sick



of the whole of the Sudan business; there was little object, now that Gordon was dead, in undertaking renewed operations on what would have had to be a very large scale. A new Franchise Bill attracted all the public attention, and we were quite forgotten. The idea of avenging Gordon's death gradually fizzled out; that of evacuation took its place, and by the end of May we were under orders to quit. The unfortunate riverain inhabitants had also to quit, if they did not want their throats cut by the Dervishes; and a pitiful and increasing procession of natives and all their belongings went hurrying down-stream along the western bank in search of safety. Poor devils! they had a bad time of it for many years to come.

It took us a month to get to Cairo—partly on our own legs, partly by boat, partly by steamer and partly by train. And having arrived there we were infinitely disgusted at learning that no separate medal was going to be issued for the whole thing, but that we were only to have the old blue-and-white Egypt medal (which many of us had already) and a couple of clasps. Surely this bit of cheese-paring was unnecessary. It made bad blood—certainly amongst the men.

On the 4th July we left Alexandria, in the P. & O. *Australia*, for home. Of the voyage nothing need be said except that the captain, a man of imagination, wanted to make a splash on arrival at Portsmouth, and commissioned me to draw him a special flag wherewith to notify the special cargo he carried. So I painted him an enormous black camel on a white flag, and this he hoisted with pride as we approached the Hard. The effect was scarcely what he anticipated. Steam pinnacles by the dozen put off from the shore, all containing purple-faced and explosive naval officers, demanding what the h——l he meant by hoisting that something bath-towel, that infernal antimacassar, that most irregular and

ever-to-be-condemned rag when approaching one of Her Majesty's naval stations? It appeared that the signalmen, both on shore and in the men-of-war, had been reduced to a state of chaotic imbecility by hunting in vain through their flag-books for an interpretation of our flag; and this was the result. I believe the poor captain never heard the last of it; but he was partly consoled by being allowed to accompany us next day to Osborne and figure in the parade of the G.C.R. that Her Majesty had ordained. The Queen received us most kindly, and spoke a few gracious words; but we heard that she was much disappointed at not seeing us in our beards and torn and war-stained clothing, as she had expected. We were, in fact, much too clean.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A TRIP TO RUSSIA.

I now joined the 2nd Battalion, quartered in London ; and finding much to my surprise that I should probably get four months' 'second leave' (*i.e.*, after Christmas), determined to devote it to travelling ; for, having spent practically no money during the ten months I had been away, I was, comparatively speaking, in funds for the time being.

At that time a subaltern's pay in the 'Brigade' ran to the magnificent sum of about £94 a year, and, besides this, we got £70 a year Guards' Pay from the Stock Purse. This was a purely private fund originated by officers of the Brigade during the good old 'purchase' days ; for each officer, on promotion and on leaving, then paid a substantial sum into the Purse, and the interest of it went towards mitigating the extra expense incurred by officers whilst living in London or at Windsor. I believe the whole thing was taken over by the financial authorities at the War Office, and eventually 'bagged' by them, although it was in no sense public money ; but I only know that it was always rather a ticklish question, and could not be pressed by us. At the Staff College, for instance, I was docked of my Guards' Pay because I was not in London, and had immense difficulty in getting hold of it. I was eventually successful, but was told that it was only given to me as a great favour, and

was warned that it was not to be looked on as a 'precedent.'<sup>1</sup>

In any case we saw very little of our pay, for it practically all went in Brigade, Regimental and Battalion mess funds and plate funds, drum funds, company funds, games funds, coach, athletic and boat funds, besides compulsory subscriptions of all sorts, in many cases to objects of which we had never even heard. About the only thing to which we did not subscribe was the Regimental Band, which was carried on at the exclusive expense of the Duke of Cambridge, our Colonel-in-Chief. But on looking at one's pass-book at Cox's, in the fond hope that one's balance was on the credit side, one would see items of "To widow of late Quartermaster-Sergeant X——"; "To school-treat for children"; "To Guards' Home"; "To wedding present for Captain Y——" (even though one barely knew him by sight), &c., &c., &c. My private allowance was £360 a year; but even though I had no expensive tastes, lived at home whilst in London, did not care in the least about racing and could not afford to hunt, I was very rarely on the right side at the bank, and was often £200 or more overdrawn. It always somehow came right in the end, even without an application to my father—which I never once made; but, anyhow, it never worried me, for a subaltern's views on the subject of cash are always pleasantly buoyant.

I had always had a hankering to see Russia, and especially the Caucasus; for my imagination had been fired by the stories of wild bison, bears and big stags told me by a rather out-at-elbows acquaintance I had picked up in some Bohemian resort, who had spent some time in the latter country. He provided me with some Russian maps, and I had forthwith begun to learn Russian in my spare time; but

<sup>1</sup> It has now been abolished altogether (? stolen by the Treasury).

it did not progress very far. When, however, I mentioned my desire to Vesey Dawson (of the Coldstream and G.C.R.), he agreed to come with me; and we roped in 'Wilty' (Lord Winchester), also of the Coldstream, and F. R. Gregson, a civilian (or rather a Militiaman) whom we knew well. He had, by the way, volunteered for the Nile campaign, and come out in charge of some camel transport. Gregson wanted not only to go to the Caucasus, but to go on through Persia and Afghanistan to India. This we could not do, as our leave would not admit of it; but we agreed, if time allowed, to go as far as Persia with him.

Reinforced by Portland (late Coldstream) and Ralph Vivian (late Scots Guards)—who were going to shoot bears in Russia—we started, a cheery party, for St Petersburg in January 1886. Arrived there, *via* Berlin and Virchobolovo, we found it, of course, frightfully cold, but enjoyed our arrival in the capital enormously—for we were most hospitably received. With one slight exception, however; for when we went to pay our respects to Sir Robert Morier, the British Ambassador, he received us, we thought, a trifle coldly. Next day, he being a distant connection of my mother's, I went there to luncheon alone, and the reason became apparent. "Will you have the goodness to inform your travelling companions," thundered the Ambassador, "that when they pay a visit to Her Majesty's representative abroad, they should be properly attired, and not be dressed as if they were going to play a game of lawn-tennis?" In vain I explained that the brown boots and shoes we had all been wearing were the latest fashion in London, and were considered a highly respectable addition to a short coat in any-one's drawing-room.<sup>1</sup> He was not to be appeased: a letter of explanation and apology had subsequently to be sent—and was graciously accepted.

<sup>1</sup> *Tempora mutantur.*

Thereafter he was charming to all of us, and procured us invitations to many interesting functions.

Chief among these was a ball at the Winter Palace. It was indeed a magnificently brilliant sight. Lit with thousands of candles, the huge rooms were packed with an ever-varying mass of brilliant uniforms and dresses from every part of the Russian Empire: dark green and gold officers of the Guard; Circassian Cossacks in long brown dressing-gowns hung about with daggers and silver cartridge-clips; Red Cossacks from the Don; Blue, White and Green Cossacks from the Terek, the Kuban and the Urals; here and there a Mullah in sober turban and kaftan; long-haired, black-robed priests; Governors of distant provinces; Siberian officials in all sorts of quaint kits; Chinese, Poles, Turkestanis, Samoyedes, Finns—all the Governments of the great Empire were there represented. And not least among the throng were the ladies of Muscovy, beautifully dressed for the most part, some with barbaric jewels and head-dresses, and on the whole a great improvement on what we had been led to expect. The Kalmuck type, of course, predominated, but there were many exceedingly pretty women, and all seemed out to enjoy themselves—for there was much more vivacity and chatter and laughter and movement than was the case at our own Court balls of the period.

And the supper! Over a thousand at a time sat down to an excellent meal at tables decked with gold and silver plate, and were waited on to a great extent by a large number of chamberlains and pages (gentlemen, not lackeys) of the Imperial Household, and sweet champagne flowed by the bucketful. I tremble to think what the evening's entertainment must have cost the Imperial purse!

Next day we visited (in uniform, of course) the barracks of the Preobrazhenski Guard, and the Emperor's Company was paraded in the barrack-

rooms for our benefit. They were all magnificent men, and the finest of all was the company sergeant-major, who was hung with medals and decorations literally from one shoulder of his double-breasted tunic to the other. We inquired timidly as to the number of campaigns in which this warrior had been engaged; but it appeared that his only war service was the Turkish campaign of 1878, represented by one medal, all the other decorations being those bestowed by foreign potentates who had inspected the company. We noticed among other details that the bayonet never leaves the muzzle of the rifle, even indoors; the Russians are great believers in the efficacy of cold steel, and the long bayonet always remains fixed, so as to accustom the man to the balance of the arm he would use in a hand-to-hand fight.

A dinner with the Gardes à Cheval (one of the two Guard Cuirassier regiments) a day or two afterwards opened our eyes to the lavish hospitality—particularly in the way of liquor—dispensed by Russian officers, and we returned to our hotel in a somewhat overfull condition; I remember Wilty collapsing into an arm-chair on his return and feebly calling for someone to come and scratch his head. Hence I looked forward with some apprehension to my forthcoming invitation to dine with the Red Hussars of the Guard, for I knew that I should there have to uphold the honour of the British Army all by myself.

I forget how it was that I was asked and not the others; I rather think it was by the kindness of the Grand Duke Serge (afterwards assassinated), for his wife, the beautiful Princess Ella of Hesse, had been a great friend of my sister Feo when she was in London, and was particularly charming to me in consequence. (It seems too appalling to think that this lovely creature, who was kindness and goodness itself throughout her life, should after-

wards, when Abbess Superior of a benevolent Order, have been brutally murdered by the Bolsheviks in 1917 and her body thrown down a mine-shaft. I still have a photograph of her in Russian Court dress which she gave me at the time of my visit, and cannot look on it without feeling a revulsion of horror at her terrible death.)

I was taken down by a Count Steinbock to Tsarskoye Syelo by train, and after a somewhat cursory glance at the barracks and stables of the Red Hussars we went to dinner—somewhere about 2.30 P.M. Nearly all the officers talked French fluently, and the Grand Duke Nicholas,<sup>1</sup> who at that time commanded the regiment, did his best to welcome me. Indeed, the officers were almost too profuse in their attentions, for, to start with, they insisted on my drinking two glasses of vodka—that rather tasteless but insidious spirit—at the *zakuska* (table of *hors d'œuvres*, &c.) which preceded the meal.

Then we settled down to business—and a somewhat serious one it proved for me. For at varying times every officer—there were at least twenty—insisted on drinking a glass of sweet champagne with me, and food and delicacies of all sorts were almost thrust upon me. At last, to my relief—for I was feeling already somewhat muzzy—the meal came to an end, and my health was proposed, in French, by the Grand Duke. I shakily rose to my feet to respond, but was shouted at in Russian; and to my clouded brain was conveyed the information that before responding I was expected to walk round the table and drink a glass of champagne—again!—with every member of the Mess. With the desperate and dominant feeling that the honour of the British Army was at stake, I got up and wobbled unsteadily round the table, holding on like grim death to each succeeding chair-back in my devious

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently C.-in-C. of the Russian Army during the first year of the Great War.



progress. Luckily the champagne glasses were those narrow things which hold only a mouthful or two, otherwise I should not have been here to-day to pen this tale. My return—still more or less upright—to my chair was hailed with cheers; but on my essaying to take my seat I was prevented by the Grand Duke, who whispered that I now had to respond.

Wearily straightening myself again—still with the honour of the British Army as my only guiding star—I did my best to smile on the swaying red cloud that surrounded me and commenced slowly and carefully, “*Messieurs les officiers des Hussards de la Garde de Sa Majesté l’Empereur de toutes les Russies!*” Pause. Then I said it again, somewhat less distinctly—and sat down suddenly. Roars of applause from the table, to which I responded by feebly waving my hand.

The next thing I remember was a hail from the Grand Duke, who was now sitting on a sofa at the other end of the room, to come and join him. I did my best to comply, but—I never knew before what it was to have one’s legs absolutely refuse to carry one—I collapsed with a crash on to the floor before I got there. I was picked up again at once and deposited alongside the Grand Duke; and before I knew what was happening he flung his arms round my neck and kissed me on both cheeks, shouting out, “When the Russian Hussars of the Guard meet the British Grenadiers of the Guard in battle, we will salute each other and pass by on the other side!” and he kissed me again.

The next item on the programme was the entry of a dozen N.C.O.’s, who proceeded to dance and sing a Russian folk-song, working themselves up into a kind of frenzy, and hopping up and down in that curious squatting step which we have all seen in the Russian ballet, throwing out alternate legs in front of them, till to me the whole world

seemed flying round in chaos. I closed my eyes, but opened them again to find a couple of huge sergeants bearing down on me. They hoisted me on to their shoulders and carried me round the room, still dancing and yelling to the strains of that infernal song. It stopped suddenly, and the sergeant-major made a short speech in Russian. I was prompted by an officer what to say in Russian, and said it—only a few words ; but luckily they understood, and even complimented me on my accent ! (I have not the vaguest idea what it was I said, and only found out years afterwards that I was expected to tip the N.C.O.'s heavily for the show they had given me—and never knew it.)

By this time it was about six o'clock, and the last train to St Petersburg had gone. So we drove back the twelve miles in an open sleigh, and upset in the snow when half-way back. This helped considerably to restore me to my normal self, and I went to a ball at Prince Yusupov's and stayed there till four o'clock in the morning. But oh ! what a wreck I was next day ! And I had to go to luncheon at the Grand Duke Serge's, and the rest of my party had gone on to Moscow and taken, by mistake, my frockcoat with them. And I had to borrow somebody else's—Tom Grosvenor's at the Embassy—which did not fit and was much too long for me. Let me draw a veil. . . . But those twenty-four hours I shall never forget.

Two or three days in Moscow followed, wherein we stayed at the big Slavyanski Bazar Hotel and, *inter alia*, selected our sterlet for dinner from the pond in the vestibule. A stout and prosperous merchant was there pointed out to us who had recently made a pile of money, and had celebrated the occasion by having a bath of champagne ; it must have cost him a pretty penny if he was anywhere near covered. Then round the wonderful Kremlin—with the extraordinary church of St Basil topped by huge

barbaric onions of gold, scarlet and green—and to the Troitsa monastery; in fact, the usual round of sights. And then, having dropped Wilty, whose leave was up and who was returning *viâ* Paris, the party, reduced to Vesey Dawson, Gregson and myself, moved off south in the direction of Persia.

Whatever drawbacks there may have been in Russia, railway travel was certainly not one of them. Never have I seen such comfortable carriages—a neat little well-warmed cubicle with bed and arm-chair for each of us, and the very best of food at the huge restaurant halls where we stopped at stated intervals, with an hour allowed for each meal. You paid a fixed sum and helped yourself to anything you liked—game, fish, meat—all quite excellent. (Why cannot we do the same in this country?) The landscape was certainly depressing—mile after mile of snow-covered plain, dotted at intervals with extensive black fir-woods, and with only an occasional wooden farmhouse to show that there were any inhabitants at all in the country.

The first day out we had to change trains, with five hours to wait, at Ryazan; and having discovered that there was an Imperial Army stud in the vicinity, we determined to visit it. The fact that we arrived at Ryazan at seven in the morning was of no moment to us, and we started off at once in an open sleigh, arriving at our destination at a little after eight. There we hammered at the gate for some time, and were at length admitted by a pardonably suspicious guardian swathed in sheepskins, and conducted to an extremely cold sort of waiting-room. Our visiting-cards eventually produced a result in the shape of the Director of the Stud, who arrived after some time, very apologetic (in French) for keeping us waiting, but evidently only just out of bed, for he could hardly keep his eyes open, and had distinctly forgotten to brush his hair. Captain Popov was his name, a good-

looking and very polite officer of the Chevaliers Gardes, with a fair beard and a lady evidently somewhere in the background—small blame to him in this desert spot.

In answer to his quite natural desire for enlightenment, we confided to him that we merely wished to see the stud, if we might, for we were English officers with a taste for horseflesh but unfortunately no letters of introduction. He would have been perfectly justified, as we felt, in kicking us out there and then; but, being a man of the world, he naturally concluded that, being English, we were mad, and as we seemed harmless and might have some method in our madness, such as some knowledge of horses by which he might profit, he determined to humour us. He accordingly retired for a few minutes to complete his toilet and get into uniform, and then took us round the establishment.

The horses, bar a few English stallions, and those rather poor ones, were somewhat disappointing. But there were plenty of them, and Captain Popov listened to our prattle on matters equine with the profoundest attention. His was an expressive face, and we noted the successive shades of wonder, inquiry, surprise, indecision and deference rapidly chasing each other across his countenance. At last his expression became settled. He had come to the conclusion that we were emissaries from the British Government, sent out for the purpose of buying up large quantities of Russian horses for a campaign, probably in Central Asia; and nothing that we could say would alter his opinion. Of course, he gave us to understand, we preferred not to say who we really were, but, after all, not even Englishmen would be so mad as to drive out seven miles over that snow at 7 A.M. on a bitter winter's morning merely to look at a few horses. And we left it at that. But meanwhile he thawed and became most hospitable, pressing on us tea and sweet cakes when

we found ourselves perforce unable to accept his invitation to luncheon. We discovered afterwards that he had been a *persona grata* at Court, but that he had gone the pace a little too warmly and been sent to cool his heels for a time in a comfortable though somewhat desolate billet in the country. In any case, we were most grateful to him for his understanding, and shall always entertain pleasant recollections of our reception at his hands.

Our subsequent train journey was uneventful between Ryazan and Vladikavkaz—the latter a dirty little town lying at the foot of the Caucasian range and at the entrance to the Daryal Pass. We had to approach the police on the subject of getting a carriage to take us across the mountains to Tiflis, and, after concluding the negotiations, the captain of police, I remember, stood shyly in the room, shifting from one foot to the other. “Why doesn’t he go?” we whispered to our courier. “He wants a tip,” he whispered back. “How much?” “Oh, two roubles would be quite enough.” So he had them, and departed wreathed in smiles. And so it was throughout Russia in those days—and doubtless is in these as well. Ivor Herbert, later Military Attaché at St Petersburg, told me afterwards that he, too, went to the Caucasus to get some shooting, for which a permit was required from the Governor-General. Well provided with introductions, he went to see the great man, who was most affable and promised to make all arrangements. But somehow they did not materialise, and for a week or so Herbert was left kicking his heels at his distinctly uninteresting hotel in Tiflis. Then he took counsel with a Russian friend as to the reason. “But you evidently haven’t tipped him,” said his friend. “What? Tip the Governor-General?” cried Herbert. “Of course,” responded the other. “Next time you go to see him, leave a couple of silver-mounted revolvers, or something of that sort, on the mantelpiece; he’ll see

them soon enough." And so it was ; and the party got their permit the very next day.

This was luckily not necessary in our case, for I had met the then Governor-General, General Dondukov-Korsakov, in St Petersburg, and he had very kindly given me a letter, without a *quid pro quo*, to his *locum tenens* ; so things were easily managed when we did arrive in Tiflis. But I am going ahead too fast.

The 'military' road over the Daryal Pass—then practically the only means of communication with Transcaucasia—was an excellent one, and was kept clear of snow throughout its length by gangs of labourers. Local colour appeared now and then in the shape of wild-looking horsemen in massive sheep-skin caps, long Caucasian dressing-gown coats, with slung rifle and murderous-looking *khanjar* (long knife) depending from the waist in front, the whole generally covered by a huge *burka* or cloak of hairy goatskin or brown felt—a most excellent garment, as I subsequently found, for keeping out the cold.

Mount Elburz, the highest peak, a long way off to the west, was, of course, not visible from the road ; but Mount Kazbek, the next highest, towered above us for many miles, and must have formed an extremely chilly abode for Prometheus in the old days—not to mention the additional discomfort of the attendant vulture—or was it an eagle ? Large and most hairy pigs, looking like extravagant brown wild boars, ran fiercely about the few hamlets we passed ; and our stay at the little half-way inn was enlivened by a Russian colonel who lashed himself into a towering rage because the landlord refused to supply him with a second plateful of *shchi* (very excellent cabbage-soup) for nothing. Next day we passed the jaw-breaking village of Mtzkhet—the ancient capital of Georgia—and came down into Tiflis in time, I think, for a late luncheon.

Our hotel was not at all bad ; but I was somewhat

surprised at receiving, shortly after arrival, a pink letter addressed to me by name, and couched in several languages—French, German, Italian, a scrap of English and a little Spanish. It was signed by a lady, of whom I had never heard, stating that she had been a lady-in-waiting at Court in St Petersburg, but had just been exiled for some peccadillo to Tiflis. She had seen us in the train and ardently desired to make our, and especially my, acquaintance. She also hinted that her beauty had been the cause of jealousy on the part of her Imperial mistress, and had led to her present grievous position, and concluded by saying that if I desired to meet her she would be delighted if I and my friends (this touch was a trifle disappointing) would come on the following night to the circus, where she would reveal herself to us at a given spot and hour. This was most interesting and intriguing, and we took places for the circus accordingly, full of curiosity as to the identity of our fair friend.

Meanwhile we spent the day in wandering about the town, of which I have but little recollection. But sincerely we hoped that our lady bore no resemblance to the Circassian ladies of whose beauty we had heard so much, and whose faces we found in no way to come up to our expectations. In this respect we may have been unfortunate; but the houris we met possessed heavy, uninviting, beak-nosed faces plastered with rouge and powder and crowned by pork-pie hats, from which descended, at the back, long dark veils, which almost covered their balloon-like figures of black silk. In fact, the impression left on my mind was that of John Leech's beauties of 1860—bar the beauty.

The circus was rather a shabby affair, we thought, and we marvelled that a lady of high degree should give us an appointment there. However, we were all three true to the tryst; and at the appointed time a rather pretty little cloaked woman approached

us and asked timidly which of us was I. We began a polite little conversation in French, and matters were gradually growing interesting when I noticed her suddenly shrink, with a look of apprehension in her dark eyes. A huge Russian officer was bearing down upon us, and as he came within hail he began overwhelming her with what was evidently a shower of abuse, to which the little lady replied in frightened monosyllables. He seized her by the wrist, hardly deigning to cast a glance at us, and dragged her off. And as she departed, we caught sight of a glitter of tinsel and flesh-coloured tights under her cloak.

Never mind: she had increased the receipts of her circus by the price of three stalls *au premier rang*.

Half an hour afterwards we were on the midnight train bound for Baku. The directors had very kindly placed their saloon-car at our disposal, and we slumbered peacefully through the sleet and mist till we arrived at our journey's end next morning about eleven.

Rarely have I seen such a filthy town. The horses which drew our ramshackle little cab were up to their hocks in mud, and we passed along an apology for streets and tumble-down houses till we were landed at a mean little building which represented the best hotel in Baku. The reek of oil was everywhere, and the muddy ground had a curiously elastic feel, which was, I suppose, due to the all-pervading element. As we had a whole day to spare, we spent it in driving out to the oil-works at Bala-khani and elsewhere.

It was a curious sight. Multitudes of high frame-works rose into the air, and from one of them a huge fountain of dirty oil was spouting, falling with a resounding clatter on the roofs of the sheds nearby. It was a jet which had got out of control; and we heard of another case in which a little syndicate of three men had sunk their all in buying a few square



yards of soil and sinking their pipe. Long before they expected it, at only a few feet below the surface, the oil leapt up with terrific force, jetted thirty feet into the air, and not only demolished their own modest little shed, but swamped all the neighbouring properties—with consequent ruin to themselves instead of prosperity for life.

Much sand is hurled up with the oil ; and we were shown various steel caps, three inches thick to start with, which when fitted over the tube would, one would have thought, have lasted for ever. But the grinding action of the sand had worn them down, in less than a fortnight, to half an inch or less ; and the difficulty then is to slip a new cap on without letting the oil get control. Although Balakhani is several miles from the shores of the Caspian, floods of oil on occasion break loose and run to the sea, and when these are set alight the spectacle must indeed be grand.

Farther on we were shown some little caves or grottoes in which the gas collects ; and when you throw a lighted match in, they catch fire with a loud bang and go on burning till the gas is exhausted. In other places you can literally stick a length of gas-pipe upright into the soil and light the top of it. No wonder that the fire-worshippers of old looked upon it as holy ground, and that wonderful legends of this wonderful country were carried to many lands.

At the time of our visit the Nobel Company of Swedes, naturalised Russians for the purpose, controlled most of the output, and had already constructed a pipe-line across country to Batum on the Black Sea. Many foreign capitalists were clamouring for concessions ; but the Russian Government had (very short-sightedly) insisted on allowing no one but Russians to hold concessions, and the resulting development was accordingly but slow.

Little did we imagine, on leaving the inhospitable flats of the Apsheron Peninsula, that thirty-two years afterwards a British force would be fighting there for its very existence, not against Russians but against Turks, who in those early days were supposed to be our bosom friends.

## CHAPTER V.

## PERSIA.

THE little steamer which was to take us to Persia was run on oil, and we studied with interest the novel machinery, controlled by one clean man instead of the crowd of dirty stokers associated in our minds with sea-travel. The oil was fed through a tube simply controlled by an ordinary tap, which dripped its contents on to a red-hot iron sheet under the boilers; and it was sprayed up in a white-hot shower, which did its work most excellently with the minimum of exertion and cost.

It was a cold damp day when the steamer lay-to several miles off the Persian coast. The flat shores and little town of Enzeli were hardly visible through the mist, and the first glimpse of the country was most uninviting. Nevertheless, within half an hour a number of large boats with pointed stems and sterns arrived, and we proceeded to clamber into one of them, whilst our baggage was perilously dropped into another. It was not a pleasant journey. The Persian boatmen, dressed in long robes and brown felt skull-caps, looked a shocking set of ruffians; but they knew their business and, though the wind was high and we got many a ducking, we arrived safely and, what was more, our baggage was landed without the loss of a package.

There was little to see at Enzeli, and we soon embarked in another boat, which rowed us across

the broad lagoon in the direction of Resht. On the way a dark and lowering cloud followed us from the north, and we innocently got out our mackintoshes in the expectation of a heavy downpour. But the cloud swiftly gained on us and began breaking up into segments, and, *mirabile dictu*, the pieces began to get speckly and to move in different directions. Ducks! there must have been hundreds of thousands of them; and though with frantic haste we got out our guns and cartridges, not one came within range—all miles high.

The British Vice-Consul at Resht, one Mr Finn, was unfortunately absent on a journey connected with matrimony; I forget for the moment whether it was on his own or someone else's account. But he had very kindly placed his house at our disposal, so we made ourselves exceedingly comfortable for the night, and set about ordering pack-animals for our journey on the morrow.

As they were not likely to materialise till the afternoon, if then, Vesey and I on the following morning basely left the transport arrangements to Gregson and went out into the muddy jungle in search of woodcock. Our shikari was only a ragged Persian with a long and ancient gun; but in the circumstances his marksmanship proved far superior to ours. We were over our ankles in mud; the bush was frightfully thick; brambles kept twitching off our hats, and one had to bend double in order to get about at all. We put up a good many birds, but on trying to straighten up and shoot at the flitting shadows, the branches always got in the way of one's gun and one simply *could not* shoot straight. I do not think we got more than one between us, but the shikari, who was thoroughly used to the ground, got four or five. How he did it I frankly do not know.

The horses, I need hardly say, did not turn up till twenty-four hours after, and, after some trouble in

loading up our pack-horses, we pursued our way over muddy lanes, in wooded country strangely reminiscent of the southern counties of our native land, to Restomabad, where we passed the night. On the following day the track wound higher and higher, and before the evening fell we were well out on the open hills. The going now became very steep, and in the dark it was as much as we could do to keep to the path. It got unpleasantly cold, and we soon came into the region of melting snow and frozen slippery ground, whilst the village of Kharzan, where we intended to stay for the night, seemed to get no nearer. Added to this, the loads kept slipping off the pack-horses, necessitating most annoying halts. At last Vesey and I left Gregson and the *chaparji* to bring on the transport, and pushed ahead to the twinkling lights of the village, where we had been told we should find an excellent inn or *khan*.

But, alas ! on reaching it we were denied admittance, on the plea that a Persian prince was occupying the whole of it with his retinue ! I gathered, however, that the prince was probably the same personage with whom we had travelled on the boat from Baku—he had been to Europe to consult an oculist—and, desperate with fatigue and hunger, we decided to appeal to his generosity. So we scribbled an apologetic note in French to him, on the off-chance that he knew that language, and the results were beyond our expectations. Not only did he tell his servants to make room for us, but he very kindly asked us in to supper, an invitation we most gratefully accepted.

Gregson turned up with the baggage half an hour afterwards, and till far into the night we sat cross-legged with our host, eating chicken-pilaf and being introduced to the pleasures of smoking the *kalyan*—a somewhat painful procedure for the beginner. Thereafter we rolled ourselves up on the floor round

the stove and did our best to sleep. Oh, those fleas !

(I have, I fear, given an unconscionably long account of our first two days in Persia, but one's first visit to an unknown land always leaves the strongest impression on one's mind.)

Next morning we descended only a short distance on to a snow-covered plateau, and at this level we were destined to remain during the rest of our travels, for the north of Persia is at a considerable altitude above the sea. Another day's riding over bare undulating country, varied with low hills, brought us to Kazvin, whence we were to continue our journey by carriage to Tehran. Nowadays there is an excellent motor road between Tehran and the coast, crossing the mountains a good bit to the east of the track we came by ; but in those days there were nothing but horses for transport of every kind, and the only *carrossable* road (save the mark !) in the country was that between Kazvin and Tehran.

The carriages for this road were very few and very ancient, and we packed ourselves and our baggage for an all-night journey into two broken-down cabs drawn by scarecrows and tied together with string. How they survived the appalling ruts and rocks on the way is beyond my comprehension ; but they did, and after a desperately uncomfortable night we rolled into Tehran and put up with Mr Arthur Herbert,<sup>1</sup> second secretary of the British Legation, who had very kindly offered to do this at the request of his brother Ivor<sup>2</sup> (in my regiment and late of the Guards' Camel Regiment with Vesey Dawson and myself).

The British Minister at the Persian Court in those days was Sir Ronald Thomson, but he was away on leave for the time being, and the first Secretary, Mr Arthur Nicolson—since well known to

<sup>1</sup> Later our Minister in Norway, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Now Major-General Lord Treowen.

the world as our Ambassador to Russia and, later on, as Lord Carnock and Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs during the Great War—was acting in his stead. Both he and Mrs Nicolson received us with the greatest hospitality, and did all they could to render our fortnight's stay a pleasant one.

Fairly cold it was, and damp as well, but we managed to put in a good deal of sight-seeing, mostly on horseback, and one day rode as far as Gul-i-Hek, the pretty summer residence of the Legation—which must be a delightful change from the heat of Tehran—during the dog-days. We also attended one or two reviews of the Persian Army at the kind invitation of the fat little ill-shaven Commander-in-Chief, Naib-ed-Dauleh by name. These took place on a huge open space outside the town, and did not very greatly impress us; for the infantry, in black sheepskin *kalpaks* (busbies) and thin, ill-fitting, dark-blue tunics and trousers, seemed to have but a vague knowledge of handling their arms and marching past. Added to this they looked cold and half starved; and no wonder, for the poor devils were supposed to feed themselves on their pay, which they had not received for thirteen months. As for physique, old men and boy conscripts jostled each other in the ranks, and it was obvious that of setting-up drill there had been none. By far the best unit was a mounted body of so-called Persian Cossacks, officered by Russians and well turned out. They comprised both cavalry and horse artillery, and were looked on as a dependable bodyguard for the Shah if it came to times of trouble.

And one day we had the honour of being received by His Majesty, Nasr-ed-Din, a vigorous-looking elderly gentleman with a huge pair of moustaches, spectacles and a magnificent diamond aigrette in his black *kalpak*; whilst on the chest of his long black frock-coat he bore a great diamond, or even

two, if I remember aright. We were, of course, in full uniform—bearskins and all for Vesey and myself, and Highland Light Infantry Militia for Gregson—and we marched solemnly up the long narrow room to where the Shah was standing in front of his golden throne. He made a few gracious remarks in his own language, translated by an interpreter, and on their conclusion we bowed and, in accordance with previous instructions, backed slowly down the room again. And here it was all we could do to preserve a solemn countenance, for the room seemed a mile long, the walls were covered with great mirrors, and the narrow door at the end was extraordinarily difficult to find; so that, puzzled by the looking-glasses yet having to keep our eyes on the Sovereign, we found ourselves backing in different directions, bumping into chairs and tables and into each other, and altogether, I fear, making a sad hash of the ceremonial.

The outside of the palace walls, I remember, were white-washed and painted with huge figures of modern Persian soldiers, which gave them a most quaint aspect; but though we had been looking forward to seeing the gardens—for who has not heard of the beauty of the Persian garden?—we were decidedly disappointed. Of ponds there were several, their walled edges a foot or so above ground and brimming over with water so as to give coolness to the air in summer; but though many great trees reared their branches to the sky, there was an air of untidiness and almost squalor over the whole thing, whilst the paths and flower-beds were weedy, ragged and uncared-for. It was, of course, the worst time of the year for gardens, but even so it required a vast deal of imagination to picture the beautiful Persian garden of romance.

On another occasion we were allowed to visit the Treasury—not a gloomy dark abode, as one would expect, of underground passages and treble-locked



safes, but a cheerful big room, whitewashed walls hung with priceless old silk carpets, and floor covered with a succession of the most monstrous modern French carpets that it is possible to conceive. Great vulgar French clocks also decorated the tables and commodes, some of the latter dating from the time of Louis XV. As for the treasure, that was all exposed—except the cash. Trophies of beautiful Oriental weapons encrusted with precious stones and mingled with a few cheap revolvers and doubtful-looking guns, were suspended from the walls; a magnificent gold throne, also covered with gems, low and roomy—for the monarchs to sit on cross-legged in Eastern fashion—stood in the centre; lovely embroidered silks and satins; a huge globe of the world, made of gold, with the continents picked out in emeralds; and lastly, a tall cylindrical glass vase on a table by itself, three-quarters full of the finest pearls. This was really the most attractive object of the whole, for it stood nearly two feet high, and was plenty wide enough for anyone who had the right to touch it to plunge his hand into it, scoop up great handfuls at a time and let the pearls trickle out like sand between his fingers. But this pleasure was, perhaps rather naturally, denied to visitors, and we had to go without it.

The bazaars were attractive, and after an immense amount of bargaining we bought some good carpets and tiles and brass-work at, as we thought, bedrock prices. So that we were grieved, on returning to England, to find that we could have got them rather cheaper at Maple's.

One or two incidents remain in my mind—some savage-looking Afghans scowling at us and half-drawing their knives as we rode past, for they were followers of Ayub Khan, at that time a prisoner of ours in the town (he escaped shortly afterwards, but was recaptured); and an interview with Zill es Sultan, late, and most efficient, Governor of Isfahan,

son of the Shah on the wrong side of the blanket. With an eye to the succession, he had had a sword made and inscribed on it in letters of gold "With this sword I will drink my brother's blood"—referring, of course, to his younger and more correctly born brother, the Heir Apparent. He was a most intelligent man, and his character for keeping order in his province may be judged by a little story told of him: that an English telegraph official having been murdered, and no evidence being available as to the criminals, he sent for the two men he suspected, entertained them hospitably and led the conversation on to the murder, praising the unknown assassins for having rid the world of an unbeliever, and saying he would reward them richly if he could but find them. The two unsuspecting scoundrels then recounted with glee their own share in the crime, were arrested forthwith and publicly hanged next day.

The fortnight that we allowed ourselves in Tehran quickly came to an end; and though Gregson, being an independent civilian, was anxious to continue his journey to India by land, he found that there would be so many obstacles, combined with a good deal of danger, in the way that he had reluctantly to give up his project, and he returned with us.

Our way back lay first along the Kazvin road that we knew so well; and as we bumped out of the Legation gate into the muddy street our last recollection of the town was a view of the sentry on the gate, who presented arms to us with one hand and held out his other for a tip. And when we threw him some small change he incontinently dropped his rifle and began hunting about for our coins in the mud.

We had determined to return to Tiflis by land; and, accordingly, on leaving Kazvin we struck off in a westerly direction towards Zenjan, thence intending to proceed *viâ* Tabriz, Julfa and Nakhchevan to Akstafa, whence we would take the train

to Tiflis. Thence to Batum, the Black Sea, the Crimea and Constantinople—and so, somehow, home.

For one thing we were in luck; for the winter was drawing to a close, the snows were melting and the post-horses (riding and baggage animals) were in good condition after their long winter rest. We had, of course, brought our own English saddles with us; but the man who had been valeting Vesey at Tehran had unfortunately forgotten to pack his with the rest of the baggage, and for the whole of the ride—seven days of it—poor Vesey was condemned to ride in a Persian saddle, a hideous, uncomfortable, V-shaped thing with short stirrups. We despatched the *Golam* (Legation messenger) who had been sent with us back to Tehran to fetch the English saddle and catch us up; but as we were travelling pretty fast ourselves—having left but little spare time to catch the steamer at Batum—it is not surprising that we never saw either the *Golam* or the saddle again on that trip.

It was a cold and monotonous journey for the most part. Besides our three selves and steeds we had two or three pack-horses to carry our baggage, with a *chaparji*, also mounted, to look after them between the post-houses, or *chaparkhanehs*, which were dotted along the road at intervals from fifteen to thirty miles apart. We used to do thirty to sixty miles a day, and were always quite glad to arrive at our post-house in the evening, after a long ride over hilly, stony, bare country, with but a few trees here and there marking some wretched little village on the way. The *chaparkhanehs* were all of one kind—a big courtyard or caravanserai surrounded by high mud and stone walls, with the guest chamber—a large bare room with floor and walls of plastered mud and small shuttered windows—up a crooked little flight of stairs and over the main gate. This, by the way, was always closed at night to keep the animals in and possible robbers out; and additional

protection was given by a couple of low towers on the walls, serving both as a keep and a look-out post. In the guest-room, however empty, there were always plenty of other unbidden guests; but on these I need not dwell, except to remark that at Mianeh there is a particularly vicious sort of poisonous bug, of which it is popularly said that it takes only three to kill a man; but these do not touch horses. When we arrived there, however, they were still enjoying their winter's sleep, and did not molest us. Near this place, by the way, is a wonderful coloured hill containing a vast variety of different minerals—green for copper, red for iron, and white, yellow, purple and even blue for other sorts of metals and earths. It was the only touch of colour on the drab landscape that we had for many days—barring occasional turquoise-blue mosques or turrets, few and far between.

Snow was lying in patches almost throughout, and as we rose higher it covered the whole landscape, on one day reaching well over our horses' hocks. Surprisingly good little horses they were too. On our longest day, into Tabriz, we covered just over eighty miles with only one change of horses; and on the following day, owing to some hitch in getting new ones, we had to take the same ones on; missing the way to the first *chaparkhaneh*, where fresh horses could have been got, we cantered on for fourteen miles to the next—so that our gallant little beasts must have done something like seventy-five miles in the thirty consecutive hours; and they seemed little the worse for it.

Of incidents there were but few. On one occasion a fierce-looking stranger with a rifle who met us passed on with a civil greeting; but after he had gone a few hundred yards the whistle of a bullet over our heads announced that he had apparently changed his mind and wanted to 'keep his eye in' by having a few pot-shots at the Feringi. Another

bullet followed, but it was so wide that we only shook our fists at him, and he calmly remounted and pursued his way. On another occasion a band of about twenty wild-looking mounted ruffians with sheepskin caps and rifles suddenly burst on us from a little valley alongside, and yelling and shouting and waving their rifles they clattered behind us, driving us and our horses at full gallop in front of them along the rocky path. It was a little alarming at first, but on seeing their grinning faces and hearing their shouts of laughter we tumbled to the consolatory fact that it was only a bit of rough fun on their part; and after a mile or so of this quaint humour they gave a final hurroosh and disappeared apparently into the mountain-side.

Having no interpreter with us, we had to make our way with the natives as best we could. I had picked up just enough Persian to do the necessary talking at the rest-houses; but at one place in particular they somehow did not seem to understand my choice Irani, and answered in some language that conveyed nothing to my mind. So we conversed by signs and I subsequently found that—most unfairly—the inhabitants of that village spoke only Turkish. When we reached the Russian frontier at Julfa it was equally bad, for my Russian was even worse than my Persian. But at all events there was a carriage-road, and the aspect of the two carriages that we had ordered to meet us there was comforting, both mentally and physically. It says much for Persian honesty that as long as we were in that country we never had a thing stolen, and this although we used most reprehensibly to leave our property kicking about the guest-houses and our bags open while we slept. But we had not been twenty minutes on Russian territory before three of my things were stolen; luckily they were not very valuable ones—only a cloak, a bridle and a whip—but still it was annoying.

For the first fifty miles in Russia we had an escort of Cossacks, and they amused us much by their tricks on horseback—very much like what we have recently seen at Olympia. But we were not entirely happy when, standing on their heads or swinging sideways from their horses, they fired off their rifles, for their ammunition was not by any means blank; and more than once a ‘ping’ not very far off our heads almost determined us to request the subaltern in charge to refrain from wasting his men’s cartridges. One of our carriages was a sort of two-seated victoria (*tarantass*), and as we drove through the night two of us could occasionally snatch a bit of sleep. But the other conveyance, called a *telega*, was merely a big springless box on wheels, and number three, lying as best he could among the baggage, had a poor and bumpy time of it.

We had left ourselves none too much time to catch the Batum boat, and consequently, or rather, precedently, the train at Akstafa. So when, after passing Mount Ararat (on which, of course, as every reader knows, the keel of the Ark still rests), we arrived at Nakhchevan, we found that we ought not to spend more than an hour there at the outside in changing horses. But Providence disposed otherwise, for at the inn was a smart A.D.C., who introduced himself to us bearing a pressing invitation from the Governor to dine with him in half an hour. Knowing by experience the average length of a Russian dinner, our hearts rather sank; but what could we do but accept such noble hospitality, especially as the A.D.C. vowed he would hurry on the dinner?

To cut the story short, we found that the Governor had invited all the authorities, military and civilian, of the district to meet us, and the consequent bean-feast, washed down by sweet champagne and lengthy speeches, lasted well over three hours. So that when, after driving all night, we arrived at Akstafa

next day at 8 A.M., we heard without surprise that our train—the only passenger train in the day—had left at 7 o'clock. It was a little hard, after riding and driving for nine days and the best part of nine nights, to miss it by only one hour.

There were, however, as it appeared, one or two goods trains expected; and though the station-master refused us permission to travel by them, we insisted on wiring to the Governor-General for leave to do so; and his consent arrived ten minutes before the second train was due. So we packed ourselves and baggage into the guard's van and arrived at Tiflis at midnight—worn and, I fear, very dirty—for we had had but one bath (at the kind British Consul's house at Tabriz) since leaving Tehran.

Next day we entrained for Batum and, arriving there at night, were told we could not have our registered baggage till next day. As our steamer started at 4 P.M., we went in the morning to fetch the baggage; but it was not there, and frantic wiring resulted in the discovery that it had been sent by accident to Poti, a port some fifty miles to the north. This was rather a blow, for there was no possibility of getting it back in time; but the British Consul (bless him and his like) came to our aid and promised to get it and send it by the next boat to meet us at Sevastopol; and he was as good as his word. Even then there was very nearly a final contretemps; for, having taken our hand-baggage on board, we went to a restaurant, luckily within view of the boat, for a meal. We had hardly finished one course when, through the window, I saw clouds of smoke emerging from the funnel and men actually engaged in clearing away the gangway. With a wild yell we sprang from our chairs, hurled some money at the waiter and dashed out, sprinting our hardest for 300 yards. And we actually had to jump for it, for the steamer was just moving

away: the wretched boat was starting an hour before her advertised time.

Disembarking at Yalta—the watering-place of the Crimea and the site of the Tsar's summer residence—we drove across to Sevastopol, and spent a few days there going over the battlefields of 1854. The theatre of war was strangely constricted, even to our ideas of those days, and desolate, and the little narrow harbour of Balaklava was wonderfully minute to have served as a base for our Expeditionary Force of that size—with the trenches only a mile or two away. The only actual reminiscences of the campaign were some broken British soda-water bottles and an old paling still formed of bits of Commissariat boxes; but one could still trace the lines of the trenches and the Malakov and the Redan, whilst the great fortress of Sevastopol seemed curiously close when measured by the range of guns of the present day. Our past strategy also seemed woefully deficient—considering that for the best part of two years we were assaulting a fortress whose rear was entirely open for the transmission of Russian supplies and reinforcements.

Regarding the town itself, the chief memory that I retain is of the Port Admiral, a cheerful person of the name of Balck. Oddly enough he was a strong Anglophil, and, still more oddly, he had made a deep study of our Episcopal system.

I remember well his assertion that there was a Bishop of Killaloe; and when we laughed politely at his statement and told him that Killaloe was only a name in a comic song then much in vogue, he contradicted us flatly, and proved our rank ignorance to his complete satisfaction.

Then to Constantinople, where the Ambassador, Sir Edward Thornton, was most hospitable to us. Gregson had left us at Sevastopol, and here Vesey and I parted company, Vesey moving off by rail



whilst I took the steamer in the direction of Italy. The boat stayed a day at the Piræus, of which I took advantage for a flying visit, in company with an Austrian photographer and a Turkish Bey, to the Acropolis; and afterwards, disembarking at Bari, I went across *viâ* Leghorn to Corsica, where my people happened to be staying for a few weeks at Ajaccio. And here my stay was cut short by a wire from home saying that General Brackenbury had applied for my services in the Intelligence Department, and would I accept? Not much doubt about that, and in a few days I was at home.

## CHAPTER VI.

1886-1888.

Two happy years did I spend at 18 Queen Anne's Gate, chiefly in the 'Latin' language section, my pleasure being only marred by the refusal of the authorities to 'second' me. So that as long as my battalion was in London, I had to do what duty I could before and after office hours; and as Bank Guard did not mount till the late afternoons, I was accordingly on Bank Guard practically every fourth day for nearly eighteen months, so that I got to know the place fairly well. Luckily for me, however, the battalion then went to Ireland. I kept my double life secret for some time, but Brackenbury eventually heard of it, and was very angry. I pacified him, however, by saying that if I did not do this duty I should have to give up my billet under him, and all was well.

I deal with Intelligence work *en gros* in a later chapter, so will not refer to it much further here than to say that I found it then, as always, most interesting. Among other tasks I had to compile handbooks on all sorts of subjects, including the Portuguese Army, the New Hebrides and Morocco, the latter of which proved subsequently most useful to me; but the chief work was keeping information up to date concerning foreign armies and theatres of war, the sources being mainly official military books of the different countries, magazines, maps

and periodicals of all sorts and, largely, the foreign daily Press. How I used to hate the 'Temps' and the 'Journal des Débats,' the 'Stampa,' 'Diario do Governo' and all the rest of them! It meant a good deal of work looking carefully through half a dozen foreign daily newspapers a day, besides many other weekly and monthly ones, with very little result. Items of military interest were few and far between, but when one did run any important ones to ground each had to be carefully indexed—some under perhaps four or five headings—and, if from the daily Press, cut out and stuck into a big cutting-book.


Boulanger and his antics used to keep us pretty busy at one time, and the French Colonial wars, of which one heard so little outside, were also of considerable importance. They led us, indeed, into the political sphere and into close contact with the Foreign Office, which was deeply interesting. But the actual research work and compilation of reports on subjects of the moment, together with suggestions for action in certain eventualities, was certainly the most thrilling work; besides, it taught one a great deal of what was going on in the world—of which one would otherwise have been completely ignorant.

The reputation, however, that I got in my battalion was that I spent my time in cutting out interesting items and pictures from 'La Vie Parisienne' and sticking them on a screen whilst my hard-worked brother officers were doing my duty! Intrinsically this was a libel; but, all the same, each section kept a private screen on which little items of humour—often unconscious—from the foreign Press were carefully pasted. I remember one in particular—an account by an Austrian naval officer of a cricket match at Gibraltar—which was screamingly funny, though written with the utmost seriousness; and an application from a Spaniard, who proposed towing balloons about by teams of

trained swans, also quite seriously meant. I do hope that the present generation of Intelligence officers keeps up the tradition of the screens; some of the old ones would be historically valuable by now.

The two years at Queen Anne's Gate finished, I rejoined the 2nd Battalion, at Chelsea I think, and did strenuous duty with them for three months. 'Duke's inspection' took place as usual about the middle of July, and this antiquated piece of what might have been termed, without much irreverence, 'eye-wash,' may be worth glancing at. All the Guards battalions available formed up in Hyde Park, in review order and in line facing Park Lane; and when the Duke of Cambridge, surrounded by a 'large and brilliant staff,' including many Royalties and all the big-wigs at the War Office and Military Attachés, moved solemnly on to the ground, he was received, of course, with a Royal salute. Thereafter the battalions marched past twice, once in column (eight companies per battalion) and once in quarter-column (*i.e.*, closed up); sometimes also we marched past at the double. Then there was battalion drill and even brigade drill, where three (not four) battalions with a cloud of 'markers' carried out the most complicated and impossible evolutions with extraordinary steadiness and celerity. After that came a brigade attack on an imaginary or 'skeleton' enemy who always lay somewhere along the Bayswater Road; and the strange sight was seen of hundreds of bear-skinned Guardsmen deploying at the double across the great open space, driving crowds of delighted spectators, men, women and children, in front of them, and taking imaginary cover, whilst the welkin rang with the five blank rounds per man that had been issued for the show. When the ammunition was all expended the troops were reformed into line, and then came the great moment of the day—Brigade bayonet exercise. A

pecially selected major rode to the front, and after forming the battalions into four (or was it eight ?) lines, he gave the necessary and very numerous words of command at the top of his voice. (There was always a little mild betting beforehand, odds dependent on his known nervousness or sangfroid, whether he would give the words correctly or not ; not that it mattered, for every man knew them thoroughly, and could be depended on to do the right thing at the right moment, whether he got the right word of command or not.) But it never *looked* quite perfect, as the line was so long that the men on the flanks, of course, received the word a shade after the men in the centre. Then came the supreme moment, " Bayonet exercise in quick time —point !" the whole Brigade carrying through the complicated show without words of command. It was generally magnificently done, two to three thousand bayonets flashing as one, the perfection and criterion of drill, steadiness and discipline ; but on occasion the time was not quite perfect, and then there was trouble for somebody. Generally, however, after the " Advance in review order " and final Royal salute, the dear old gentleman collected the commanding officers and addressed to them words of sincere congratulation, and everybody went home happy, especially the officers who were now at liberty to go on ' first leave.' This generally lasted from the end of July till the end of November : oh, those happy old days !



## CHAPTER VII.

## GERMAN MANŒUVRES, 1888.

ON this particular occasion, not being entitled to first leave, I was just leaving the ground and resigning myself to the idea of a sultry tour of guard-mounting in August and September when, much to my astonishment, I was sent for by the Prince of Wales; and there and then His Royal Highness informed me that he was going to send three officers to the German manœuvres at the new Kaiser's invitation—and would I go? Gratefully, of course, I accepted, and was told to get ready and start in about ten days. My companions would be Colonel Oliver Montagu (of the Blues) and Colonel Prinsep (of the Indian Lancers—I forget which regiment). This was indeed an unexpected honour—a subaltern to go with two Colonels, and I trust I made my gratitude evident.

As the reader may remember, there had been a good deal of anti-English feeling at Berlin during the Emperor Frederick's last illness. It was mostly due to the fact that the Empress Frederick (our own Princess Royal, of course) had insisted, as the Germans thought, on putting Sir Morell Mackenzie, the well-known English throat surgeon, in charge of her husband's case, and had more or less got rid of the German doctors.

As a matter of fact this was not true. It had been done at Bismarck's own instigation, and the Chan-

cellor, in order presumably to throw discredit on the Empress—whom he hated—had carefully kept the matter a secret (*v.* Sir Rennell Rodd's letters in the 'Times' of November 1926 to February 1927).<sup>1</sup> Owing to the strong liberal views of Her Majesty—'die Engländerin,' as Bismarck always called her—and to the influence that she had over her husband, who was also liberally inclined, many of the German statesmen were alarmed lest the Emperor Frederick should introduce a milder, and possibly more democratic, character into the policy emanating from the throne. This, they considered, would be primarily due to the hated English influence; and Mackenzie's overbearing and tactless manner in his relations with the German doctors also gave great offence. The English were consequently not popular in German eyes, and there was almost a sigh of relief among the German reactionaries when the Emperor died. His son, however, as they knew, could be thoroughly trusted to carry out the extreme Prussian views, and, as they also knew, his relations with his mother were extremely bad; he went so far indeed as to place sentries, the moment his father died, round her palace, and, much to her very natural indignation, treated her for a few days almost as a prisoner. This action was of course much resented in England at the time; but the Prince of Wales, tactful as ever, had no wish to quarrel with his nephew at the moment of his accession, and when, as I gather, the Kaiser more or less held out a minute olive branch, it was not refused.

Consequently we soon found ourselves in Berlin and put up for the time being in an hotel, employing our spare time in leaving cards on the various military authorities and others to whom we had been told to be civil.

It was rather difficult to know what uniform to wear whilst we were distributing our pasteboards.

<sup>1</sup> 25/11/1926, 1/12/1926, 18 and 23/1/1927, 1/2/1927.

According to my ideas, undress uniform was quite sufficient, but Oliver Montagu thought differently. He did not think that his own full dress, with cuirass, white breeches and long boots, was necessary; on the other hand, of his undress, he had only brought a blue patrol-jacket, and left his blue frock-coat at home. So he compromised on the strength of the German custom for such social duties—"Kleine Uniform mit Helm"; and not only did he wear a plumeless helmet with a patrol-jacket, which looked quite a decent kit, but he ordered me to conform to the German idea too and wear my bearskin with my blue frock-coat! Lord, I did feel such a fool in this kit, and I was not surprised at the somewhat ribald remarks of the crowd which collected every time we got out to deliver our cards, for my bearskin and Prinsep's gold and blue turban swathed round his pointed cap were items of uniform to which the good Berliners were not accustomed. I wondered what the Prince of Wales would have thought—and said; but I had to obey orders.

I was attached at once to the First Guards (*Erstes Garde-Regiment zu Fuss*) and put in charge of a bear-leader, a tall good-looking subaltern called Franz von Bülow; and he very soon took me to Potsdam to make the acquaintance of my new brothers-in-arms. I may say at once that they were most civil, and, with one or two exceptions, capital fellows as far as I could judge. Thanks to my being quite at home in German, I was soon on excellent terms with them, and was shown every detail in the regiment, whilst an order was issued that I was to be treated in every way by all ranks as a Prussian officer.

The men were of magnificent material, and were sized extraordinarily evenly in companies. The shortest company was about 5 feet 10 inches, and the *Kaiser-Kompagnie* was quite 6 feet 1 inch in height: no wonder—they had the pick of the nation



to draw on.<sup>1</sup> The smartness on parade was, of course, wonderful; but I was rather surprised at the comparative slackness in barracks—the men seemed to let themselves go, and in their dirty brown canvas fatigue-suits compared unfavourably, I thought, with ours at home. As to kit, each man had no less than five tunics; but they were passed on from man to man as his time was up, so the number was not really very excessive; and as there is no smoke and very little dirt in the Potsdam air, the dark-blue tunics lasted much longer than our scarlet ones in London. The barrack-rooms again were very different from ours: much smaller, only holding five or six men apiece; generally a considerable froust—for the windows, even in summer, were usually kept shut; and each man had a stool and a large cupboard of his own, of which he kept the key. Bülow expatiated to me on the strict cleanliness and neatness which was enforced in the arrangement of these cupboards, and on my asking to see one obtained the key from the nearest man and flung his door open. You never saw such a mess: dirty hunks of bread and sausage, letters and papers strewn about, tunics, shirts and trousers crumpled up and flung in anyhow—it was all I could do to keep my countenance. I expected an explosion, but the reprimand was mildness itself; for with all the discipline and occasional brutality there was a curious tendency, I found later, to treat the men rather like children and let them, when off duty, do what they liked, meanwhile encouraging a sort of home-like atmosphere. Hence the froust and the dirty cupboard; and as for meals, always eaten in the little rooms, every man fetched his own food from the kitchen, adding to the ordinary ration either from the dry canteen (if a man of substance) or from the home parcels of food, which arrived

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, the King's Company of our own Grenadiers is now about this standard.

with astonishing frequency, and eating, within reason, when he liked. As an instance of this paternal spirit, there was a rather curious little incident during the manœuvres. The men of Bülow's company found out that it was his birthday, and after the fighting for the day was over a number of them wandered off into the woods; thence they emerged carrying a wreath of wild flowers, which they presented to him, singing a little song written for the occasion—the whole thing as a 'Geburtstagsgruss.'<sup>1</sup> Rather nice: one can hardly imagine British soldiers doing it, however popular their officer might be; and, from what I heard, I do not know that Bülow was especially popular (anyhow, he did not behave at all nicely a year or two afterwards).

My two or three days in Potsdam included a presentation to the Emperor—at the officers' mess. He was very civil, and shook me warmly by the hand—rather painful, I remember, for his right hand was most powerful; and, much to the other officers' surprise, he addressed me as "Du."

Amongst other items was the annual 'Adler-schiessen' (Eagle-shooting), a historical and rather curious regimental fête. It consisted in the officers of the regiment assembling in a garden and shooting at a wooden Prussian eagle, about eighteen inches in height and breadth, nailed to a tree about ten feet from the ground. No rifle under fifty years of age was allowed; and all sorts of curious old sporting muzzle-loading fire-arms, even flint-locks, were brought out for the occasion. The range was only about twenty yards, and, of course, nearly every shot hit the bird; but the object was to shoot the eagle to pieces, and each person who shot off a bit of the wing or leg, or the crown, or sceptre, or head got a prize varying in amount according to the importance of the bit he shot off. They asked me to shoot too; and much to my surprise—for it was

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, birthday-greeting.

very much in the nature of a fluke—I shot off a leg and sceptre. This gained me—I think a trifle to the annoyance of the other officers—the second prize. This was a good modern sporting-rifle, already engraved for the occasion, but leaving, of course, the name blank. I thought I was going to get it there and then; but they made some excuse about it, and said they would send it later. And when it came it certainly was not that rifle, nor had it any inscription; but it was a very good one all the same, and most useful in the way of chamois and stags thereafter, so I have nothing to complain of in the matter.

Before leaving for the manœuvres the First Guards marched to Berlin, where their brigade (two regiments, six battalions) was assembling. We were to be brigaded with the 3rd Kaiser Alexander Garde-Regiment zu Fuss, permanently quartered in Berlin, and in the evening the officers of that regiment invited the whole of us to dinner. Oddly enough, the officers of the two regiments hardly knew each other, and a (to me) most comic ceremony took place. The officers of the 3rd formed a large circle round the room facing inwards, and those of the 1st a smaller circle inside facing outwards. Then, standing strictly to attention, at a given signal we each bowed to the officer opposite, each calling out his own name and rank at the same time, thus: "Leutnant Graf Gleichen, Königliches Englisches Grenadier Guards Regiment," and at the same moment my opposite number snapped out, say: "Hauptmann à la suite Heinrich von Hüllessen—Langescheidt." Then one pace to the left, click heels, bow from the waist and shout out your name again to the next man, who similarly responded. As there were about a hundred people all calling out their names at the same time, the row was really deafening, and one had to yell to make oneself heard. I got 'fou rire' about the fifth man, and it

was all I could do to avoid breaking down ignominiously; but I arrived at the end all right, though I fear grinning from ear to ear, much to the well-bred surprise of the last half-dozen officers. Anyhow the result was practical, for although no one, I am sure, could remember (or even hear) all the names, we were all technically introduced. It appeared later that the 1st Guards considered themselves miles above the 3rd Guards, and looked upon the dinner with them as rather an act of condescension on their part—at least, so I judged from the remarks that some of them made. This was unkind of them, for the 3rd ‘did’ us remarkably well; and after quantities of sweetish champagne, topped up by tall and foaming glasses of delicious beer at midnight, it seemed as though none of us would be very fit for parade next morning at 6 A.M. In fact, I still have a vivid reminiscence of our Colonel<sup>1</sup>—a tall and very handsome man, who later became chief Equerry to the Emperor—being helped, wobbly but smiling, by two subalterns down the steep steps into the little garden of the regimental ‘Casino’ (mess).

As for the manœuvres themselves I could not, even if I would, give a detailed description. I was attached to the corresponding company to my own, No. 2 of the 2nd Battalion, which was commanded by one Captain von Löwenfeld, a first-rate soldier, keen, capable and extraordinarily well informed on things in general—even, I was surprised to find, on Italian art. The only other subaltern was a fat little Count Pappenheim from Bavaria, who was evidently devoted more to the good things of this world than to his military duties, and suffered accordingly from Löwenfeld’s tongue. As far as I was concerned this suited me well, for he ran the company mess excellently, and had found a capital

<sup>1</sup> Von Plessen. Accompanied the Emperor to Holland in 1918; died last year.

cook (one of the men, oddly enough 'Hunger' by name, about which Löwenfeld was never weary of making feeble jokes, accepted by the good man with weary smiles). Nay, more, Pappenheim's father possessed an excellent brewery, and his son made a point of having a case of beer to meet us at every halting-place—most acceptable in the broiling September weather. But all the same it was pretty cold at night, and we were quite glad to have a little tent (unofficial) to shelter us three. The only trouble was that Pappenheim snored dreadfully, and did not at all like the boots that I periodically threw at him. Now I come to think of it, there was another subaltern—a reserve officer, a spectacled law student, very humble and well-intentioned—doing his annual training; but he was much looked down upon by the high-and-mighty officers of the 1st Guards, and the poor devil was not even invited to sleep in the tent. The men, by the way, when the fortune of war necessitated their passing the night in the open, made circular bivouacs of straw shelters—two per company—round a big fire, and kept themselves fairly warm; whilst the upper N.C.O.'s, as far as I remember, had *tentes d'abri*. Most of the nights, however, were spent in big farms, of which there were a large number in the district—east of Berlin—where we were fighting; and the farmers went out of their way to supply men and officers with whatever they could. In one case indeed the whole regiment was given a free meal by the owner, an old sergeant-major of the regiment.

Every effort was made to save the men unnecessary fatigue and to minister to their comfort, yet during the fighting and on the long marches discipline was most severely enforced. On one occasion, when we had been night-fighting and had a long march to finish up with, the men, on arriving at their quarters at noon, were given their mid-day

meal and then sent to bed in the barns for the rest of the afternoon, with strict orders not to get up till 7 P.M. Very practical; and the supply and transport service was well managed, even to there being spare carts on which men really knocked out by the sun or fatigue could rest for a while. But all the same, I saw an officer, after abusing a man for some slight shortcoming in the field, hit him straight in the face and nearly knock him down; and this called for no particular remark, though a senior officer was present.

As for the work in the field, I thought it was strenuous, dull and rather unintelligent; in fact I was somewhat disappointed. The cavalry work was poor, scouting bad. The infantry attack was spectacular, masses of men moving as if on parade, and impossible; cover remained unutilised, guns fired in full view of the enemy. Neither officers nor men seemed to take much interest in the proceedings, which were almost cut and dried. It was the first Kaiser-Manöver for the new Emperor, and there had to be a show for him. For the rest, officers and men looked on it as a thing which had to be got over, and the sooner the better, as then some of the officers could go on leave, and a whole third of the troops could go home, their service over.

I rode about as much as I could and saw a good deal of other troops besides the 1st Guards, but my efforts were at first somewhat restricted by the shape of my mount. He was a fat white horse of the name of 'Arthur,' who belonged to the Guard Hussars—I fancy he must have been a band-horse; anyhow, whenever I tried to put him into a canter he lumbered on heavily for twenty yards or so, wheezing painfully with the effort, and then relapsed into a walk. Spurs had no effect on him—they could not penetrate his adiposity, and the only way I could get him on at all was by thumping him with my scabbard, and occasionally, when no one was

looking, with the flat of my sword. An additional cause of offence was that whenever he saw a Red Hussar in the distance he would make for him at a lumbering trot, neighing loudly all the time; and it required all my strength to haul his head round, for his mouth was of iron. Eventually I exchanged mounts with Bülow, who possessed a big raw-boned horse called the 'Camel,' of which he was unnecessarily alarmed (my friend was *not* a good rider). The Camel was all right as long as you did not hold on by the reins—he did not like Bülow sawing at his mouth. Consequently I covered a good deal more country on him than with Arthur. He certainly could gallop; but his gallop was much like that of his namesake, and I used to return to camp aching all over.

The weather was beautifully fine throughout, and the last warm, still, moonlit evening will long remain in my memory. For the whole Guard Corps was bivouacked among the woods around a series of small lakes, and after the evening meal came the final tattoo, or 'Zapfenstreich.' The massed bands of the 1st Division struck up a hymn, one of those glorious old Lutheran hymns which somehow stir one's feelings to the depths in their embodiment of man's sacred trust in the power of divine love—"Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott"; and it was taken up by the whole Division in their bivouacs round the lakes, thousands of voices in harmony, echoing and re-echoing the noble music till at last it died away in the woods. Then a sharp command, "Mützen ab zum Gebet!"—two minutes for silent prayer. And then the bands burst out with a magnificent chorale followed by another one equally beautiful; and when this was over you could hear other bands in the distance repeating the chorales for the other units of the Corps, till all died away into silence, and manœuvres were over for the year.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## AFTER CHAMOIS.

THE rest of my leave was spent in chamois-shooting with my uncle Hermann Hohenlohe and my cousin Erni at their Jagdhütte in the Hinterauthal, a valley in the Austrian Tirol not far north of Innsbruck. It was a delightful place, close to the head-waters of the Isar river, which tore down from the mountains in a series of waterfalls close to the cottage, and flowed ice-green past the foot of the slope nearby; many were the blue trout that we had out of it—the best trout I ever ate. My uncle rented the valley, about eleven miles long by one or two broad, and paid the magnificent sum of £9 a year for it. But what with a staff of four stalkers and odds and ends of other people, besides the cost of bringing up hay and turnips for the chamois in the winter, and damages for ‘Wildschaden’<sup>1</sup>—largely imaginary, but vehemently insisted on by the local mountaineers—it ran him, I believe, into £400 or £500 a year. And it was well worth it.

Strenuous work it was, too. Up before daylight, we had to be a couple of thousand feet up before the sun appeared, for it was then that the old bucks began to feed; and here I cannot resist transcribing a little article I wrote (for the Household Brigade Magazine) on a day’s stalking, for it will show the sort of glorious sport we had:—

<sup>1</sup> Damage by game.



“ ‘Half-past four, sir, and time to get up,’ are the first sounds that wake me out of my sweet slumber. The servant is holding a candle six inches from my head, and when I grunt and show signs of turning over again, he respectfully pulls the bed-clothes off and waits till I am fairly out of bed and more or less awake. I wish these chamois would wait till the sun is well up before they begin their wanderings, instead of getting on the move at the unearthly hour that they affect.

“ Twenty minutes later and we—that is, my jäger (stalker) and self—are tramping through the snow at the bottom of the valley on our way to the Vomperloch, for there it is that we are to try our luck to-day. It is beastly cold, and the remains of a moon, half-hidden in silvery clouds, only serve to make the shadows of the great mountains yet blacker against the white background. The snow is not deep—it is but the last week in September—but my feet are getting very cold, and for a short space my thoughts travel back lovingly to the blankets just left.

“ Very soon we strike on to a track in the woods, hardly visible in the snow, and for the next hour or more we toil steadily up a zig-zag course. It is rather a grind, but the mountain air is ripping and keen, and makes one feel as fit as blazes. Sepp'l, the jäger, is in front, and his great calves are on a level with my face. I cannot make out why he should think it necessary to pad his calves with cotton wool—it must make his legs so hot. However, I believe it is one of the few vanities of these good Tirolese, so I avoid personal remarks on the subject. Every ten minutes he stops and mops himself, being in a profuse perspiration, but it means nothing; he will keep on steadily all the same for hours. The sun is now beginning to tinge the tops with a pink glow that I do not quite like, for it means snow to-night, or even rain and mist, which

is worse. It gets lighter and lighter, but we are not yet on the stalking-ground. It's perhaps as well that the sun is getting up, for there are some nasty little bits to cross in the way of small torrents and slippery rocks, which would be unpleasant in the dark.

"At last we stop and, jammed behind a rock, we take out our telescopes and have a good spy around. We are not more than a couple of thousand feet above our starting-point, but it is quite high enough for the fat old chamois bucks that we are after. They do not care about staying up aloft and careering around with the rest of the herd, but prefer to feed lower down, undisturbed by wives and children, where the tender grass and soft mosses are still growing on the edge of the fir forests. For which I am truly thankful.

"After a prolonged spy, Sepp'l announces that he sees, on the other side of the ravine, two bucks lying down among the thick growth of low fir-shrub (*laatschen* in Tirolese) that patchily clothes the sides of the mountains. I cannot say that I see them, but still I fancy that Sepp'l's eyes are fairly useful in this matter. The wind, what little there is of it, is distinctly in the wrong quarter, for it is gently blowing our scent in the direction of the chamois. They are, however, a long way above us, and over half a mile off as the crow flies, so they may not have got our smell yet. Our only chance lies in being able to climb up the bed of the stream, or rather torrent, that winds along the ravine, and come down on them from above. Sepp'l seizes his rifle and alpenstock, I follow suit, and we move cautiously down-hill, using the wooden end of our poles to avoid the clink of the metal point against the stones. Having crossed the stream in safety, we clamber up the steep side of the mountain on hands and knees, hot, but hopeful. It requires some management to keep the snow out of one's rifle-

muzzle, for here every man carries his own rifle slung over his shoulder, and such an invention as the Scotch rifle-case, to be carried by the stalker, has never been heard of. A Tirolese sportsman would turn up his nose at the idea of anyone having his rifle carried for him on a stalk, and I am not sure that I do not agree with him. This by the way.

“Half an hour of crawling and clambering up through the stiff *laatschen* beds, and I am becoming rather damp. We are getting pretty close to where our game ought to be, when suddenly Sepp'l throws himself flat on his stomach and I follow suit. Then comes that most annoying sound to a stalksman, a loud whistle from a chamois not a hundred yards off in the thick bush, sure signal that he is alarmed and is warning his friends. It's that wretched wind. It has shifted clean round and has taken our scent right on to the chamois again. Language no use here—only one chance left—so we jump up, and dash to an opening in the bushes where another stream is tearing down the mountain, on the off-chance of getting a flying shot. The second buck's whistle is now heard high up among the rocks, and a clatter of loose stones shows the direction he has taken, up a perpendicular wall of rock and well out of shot already. His friend will probably follow him—and so he does. A red-brown form dashes across the stream not fifty yards off and disappears round a boulder into the bushes again, followed by a bullet from me, which must have missed him by something like ten feet.

“After a few growls, Sepp'l and I come to the conclusion that we had better make tracks for a side valley a good deal higher up, for my shot will have put any more chamois that there may be in the ravine on the alert. So we get back on to the track by a short-cut which does not look inviting. It consists of rushing a frozen slope of little stones, the slope being at an angle of 45 degrees and un-

pleasantly smooth. As an incentive, Sepp'l recounts how he once lost his footing on a similar place, rolled to the bottom, and was in bed for a fortnight after. Nothing so alarming happens to me, luckily, but I pray there are no more of these slopes—they are a bit too steep for me.

“The track leads up through the fir woods, and for another hour we pursue it, perspiring but silent. Turning a corner we come on a tiny cowherd's cottage in the middle of a grass-patch, with a stray pig or two wandering around. The cowherd is absent. Seating ourselves in the two halves of a large wooden bowl (property of the cowherd), which Sepp'l breaks for that purpose, we again proceed to spy, this time without result. So we lean back against the hut and snore peacefully for some time, till it shall please the chamois to begin moving about in search of their grub.

“The sun is hot, and the wind has gone down before we arouse ourselves. Then Sepp'l brings out his dirty little telescope and says he can't see anything yet. I can quite understand it—I never can see anything but fog through it myself. So we make a move, straight aloft over the boulders this time, till Sepp'l drops flat and beckons to me. There are three bucks, one big one and two little ones, on a level with us, and not four hundred yards off. They are feeding steadily, but we can't get near them—ground too open. So after a short consultation, Sepp'l wriggles off to get round them from below, and then drive them towards me, and I make my way with much caution to a nook which I trust they will be kind enough to pass.

“Sepp'l will be away for at least half an hour, so I may as well have my luncheon; it may put some temporary courage into me also, for at this moment I feel rather jumpy, and doubtful of hitting a hay-stack at eighty yards, much less a chamois.

“I have barely swallowed my last sandwich—no

time for drinks—when I become aware that the beasts have got alarmed and are on the move, towards me luckily. On they come, bounding and hopping in a most discouraging way, till they are within a hundred yards, and then they turn short to the left and bound away uphill. Then they halt, sniffing, for one second, the big buck facing me. Bang goes my rifle, and the bullet spatters on a stone close by him. I knew I should miss him edgeways, but it was the only chance of a standing shot. The three bound madly away and stop again, not knowing where the bullet came from. Before I can get my little Martini up to my shoulder again they are off again, hopping and bobbing from rock to rock. Two more bullets do I wildly send after them, but without the smallest effect.

“I calm down after a time, and count my empty cartridge-cases. Four of them, and no result. Four shots in one day, and you may go sometimes for a week without getting one shot; and yet no result! How can I face the others when I get home?

“Sepp'l now comes up panting, and wants to know how many I got. I angrily tell him to count them himself if he wants to know. He is departing to do so, when I recall him and tell him the shameful truth, finishing up with a vow to kill a chamois to-day, even if I have to wait up all night to do so.

“After a short rest, and a pipe to soothe ourselves with, we proceed uphill in the tracks of the chamois, which are easily followed in the snow. Up and up we go, till we are close to the top ridge of this mountain, the Sundiger, which divides the valley where we have been working from the one in which lies our shooting cottage.

“There is good feeding at the extreme end of this ridge, and Sepp'l thinks it quite likely there may be some chamois there. So we proceed with great caution close under the ridge, and when within view of the end, seat ourselves gently down in the

snow and make use of our telescopes again. A long way off, a mile it may be, we see some black dots against the snow, and my heart begins to thump with resolutions taken and excitement.

"Says Sepp'l: 'In order to get within shot, there are two nasty places to cross; will you try them?'

"Now my head is not as good as it might be, but I can't get round my vow; so I screw my courage to the sticking-point, and say that of course I'll come; and I follow in fear and trembling.

"Ten minutes later and we are on the top of the ridge. Sepp'l walks gaily along, for here we are well hidden from our distant game. I follow, but not quite so gaily, for on our right hand there is a sheer drop of over two thousand feet—you can kick a stone over easily. I don't know why it should be, but I have an intense desire to follow that stone down to the valley below. The little yellow shooting cottage at the bottom, lit up by the sun, looks so cheerful and so easy of reach that it seems as if it would be the simplest thing in the world to sail down to it. However, I strangle my incipient lunacy with an effort, and keep away from the edge, only looking over it now and then.

"One of the other jäger, a man called Franz, did, once upon a time, follow a wounded chamois right up that wall of rock, and stuck half-way. Nobody could reach him from below, and he could not possibly retrace his steps; his only chance was to climb right up, if he could. And he did, having to throw away his rifle and alpenstock in order to do so. When he got to the top he fainted—lucky it did not happen before—and was ill from nerves and exhaustion for a week afterwards.

"The first of Sepp'l's 'nasty places' is nothing much: only a narrow downward ledge leading along a crumbling steep place. This we circumvent on the seats with which Nature has provided us. I only hope the other place is no worse than this.

"The chamois are still feeding quietly. By this time we can make out that they consist, apparently, of a small herd of does, with one or two young bucks among them. It is difficult to tell does from bucks at this distance, or, indeed, at a good deal shorter range. The only difference outwardly consists in the doe's horns being thinner than a buck's, and rather wider apart at the top, whilst a buck's body is a little shorter and stouter than that of a doe. Generally, too, the does, or at least the mamma does, are followed by their 'kitzes,' or little ones, but it doesn't always follow. Sometimes the kitz gets lost, and then you shoot at the doe under the impression that she is either a buck or a barren doe, for these two latter are of course the only legitimate game.

"A terrible picture rises to my mind's eye as I write this. Scene—a ravine, lined with thick fir-shrub; myself behind a rock; a stout chamois in the bushes ninety yards off. Bang goes my rifle, and the chamois drops with a bullet through the shoulder. I hurry up rejoicing—and stand appalled: the chamois is a fine family doe, and the same bullet that slew her passed through the neck of her offspring and slew it too. The kitz was hidden in the bushes by its mother's side, so I could not possibly have seen it; but, all the same, I felt at that moment like a murderer. The sequel was painful. We made the kitz into soup, and, to commemorate the sad event of the double murder, I wrote some touching poetry, intending to paste it on a little wooden shield which was to contain both the mother's horns and the kitz's budding sprouts. However, my puppy dog entered the room that evening in my absence and ate up both the poetry and the budding sprouts.

"To return: we are now approaching the other nasty place. It doesn't look anything very alarming, for it consists only of a wall of rock about twenty feet high, with plenty of cracks and excres-

cences to cross it by. Sepp'l goes first, taking both rifles, and I follow with a light heart, disregarding his remarks as to where I am to place each foot. The result is that when more than half-way across I get stuck, spread-eagled with my face against the wall, and utterly unable to get backwards or forwards. The reason is, apparently, that my left foot is where my right ought to be, and the little knob where my left toes are is too small to change feet on. This is somewhat annoying. I hardly like to attempt an aerial bound and change feet in the air, as the chances are against my right foot coming down on the knob aforesaid, and there are some unpleasantly sharp rocks ten feet below; but, on the other hand, I don't want to stay here all night. Altogether, it is perhaps as well that Sepp'l is here. That faithful man is equal to the emergency, and, with a few growls at my obstinacy in not following his advice, he scrambles out to me at a lower level. Here, holding on with his eyelids, he tells me to step on to his shoulder and change feet there. This I do, and only hope that he likes the feeling of hob-nailed shoes. Thereafter I carefully follow his advice as to where to put my toes, and arrive in safety on the other side.

"So much for the 'nasty places'; we can now devote our exclusive attention to the game.

"Between ourselves and them is a broad slope of snow, something like 300 yards square, with no cover on it at all. It would be nothing else than sheer lunacy to try and approach across it. We can't get round the side of the ridge owing to the precipice aforesaid, and we can't get round on the other side because we should be seen. Luckily a tongue of rocks reaches out from us a short way in the direction of the unsuspecting little herd, so along this we crawl till we can get no farther. Here we must wait and see whether the chamois will kindly move in our direction.



“ We wait in breathless expectation for ten minutes, and then the chamois do begin to move. Unfortunately their movement is *away* from us, and in three minutes they will be out of sight. Despair seizes upon us. One only chance is there—a long shot. So down I go on my stomach in the most approved military position, and put my sight up to 200 yards, taking a full bead. I do not for a moment expect to hit my beast, but I may as well try how near I can get. So I aim steadily at the left hand one of two who are standing together, and press the trigger. Bang! and Sepp'l, who has been gazing nervously through his telescope, shouts out excitedly, ‘He’s down! he’s down!’ and in truth I see a black thing lying kicking on the snow. By jove! I never thought I should hit him at that distance. However, there is no time to spare; the rest of the herd are bounding wildly about, not knowing where the shot came from, so I hastily load again and fire, this time at a stout little beast who is standing on a rock and facing me.

“ ‘You’ve got him too!’ screams Sepp'l, wild with delight, as the chamois gives a mad jump in the air and disappears.

“ I rather doubt it. But Sepp'l swears he saw him fall. So we hurry up rejoicing, I not forgetting to pace the distance to see how far my fluky bullet has travelled.<sup>1</sup>

“ On arriving near the place, one chamois is certainly visible on the ground, struggling in its last struggles, but I confess I do not see the second. Sepp'l takes me to the spot where he stood, the marks of his forefeet plainly visible on the snow-covered rock. Between these marks is a small furrow in the snow, so the bullet that made him jump was not so far off after all.

“ A regular crevasse lay behind him, and on the far side, ten feet below, we see the marks of all four

<sup>1</sup> Just inside 312 paces.

feet and the tracks of his speedy retreat—it must have been a tremendous jump.

“A rattle of stones a long way below suddenly arouses us from the contemplation of the jump, and we become aware that the herd is returning, checked in its mad flight, as we ought to have remembered, by another wall of rock half a mile on. Just time to get within range and have another blaze at them, when a horrible thought strikes me—I have no more cartridges! I never take out more than six, and I have used them all up!

“‘Never mind,’ says Sepp’l, who has suddenly developed a profound faith in my shooting powers, ‘you can use my rifle,’ an old muzzle-loading implement in which the charges have lain for the last six months. So we dash downhill at a breakneck pace and, with wonderful luck, manage to hit off their path within fifty yards. On they come helter-skelter, not seeing us panting behind a big stone. I select the best of the lot and pull the trigger. Dash the beastly thing; it’s missed fire! So with a misgiving mind I snap the second barrel at the nearest chamois, a fat little buck. A roar like an 81-tonner, a cloud of smoke like a London fog, and a hideous stench of blown-out candle, and I recover my senses to find that the old muzzle-loader has done its duty after all, and the little buck has gone to rejoin its forefathers in paradise.

“Sepp’l is frantic with joy, and I own I am rather far gone that way too. The only thing that damps me somewhat is that, though I have got two chamois, still I have had to fire *seven* shots to get them, a thing almost unheard of in one day’s stalking. It really has been a marvellous piece of good luck getting so many shots—as a rule one shot to three days is about the average.

“Having given the *coup-de-grâce* to the little buck by dividing the vertebræ at the back of the neck (instead of cutting his throat as would be done in

Scotland), Sepp'l performs the funeral obsequies on him, and then returns to do ditto to the first chamois. This one, unfortunately, turns out to be a doe, but still, she was not a family doe, so it does not much matter.

"The shades of eve are falling fast, and we are still a long way from home, with two chamois to carry. Sepp'l ties up one in the big green bag lashed on his shoulders, but I have no bag. So we pull and tumble the other one down hill till we manage at last to get him on the home track. Once there, it is easier going, and I hoist him on my shoulders—I had no idea a chamois was so heavy. Thus, then, we proceed, tired and burdened, but extremely happy, until through the darkness we see the lights of our little cottage, wherein all manner of good things await us. And so ends the best day after chamois I ever had."

The stalking lasted about a week, and the last ten days we spent in driving chamois—not quite so strenuous, but most exciting and, of course, more productive of game, alive and dead. The worst part of it was the long immobile waits, so cold that one had to wear heaps of clothes; and even then one's fingers were often so chilled that it played the devil with one's shooting. And to pick a buck out of a little drove that came clattering and tearing past you, all hopping and jumping from rock to rock, was—even though the range was only some 50 to 100 yards—none too easy. My best day was four chamois; but on several days I did not get a shot. It was always interesting, however, to watch the beaters through one's glasses (when they were in sight) clambering over the rocks and scrambling up and down the most appalling places, assisted only by their alpenstocks and climbing-irons. How they managed to cross some of those rock-walls with no apparent foothold was always a mystery to me;

but it seemed to come quite naturally to them, and they thought nothing of it. Both my uncle and cousin were first-rate rifle-shots, and between the three of us we got, I think, forty-six beasts in under three weeks. My share was only twelve all told; still, it was a blissful time, and I loved the place. But it began to snow heavily, and at last we had to go.

\* \* \* \* \*

I paid a last visit to the Hinterauthal three years after the Great War. My uncle was dead, my cousin had had to give it up a few years before and the proprietor (absent) was a millionaire dealer in sparking-plugs; whilst the place was overrun by touring clubs and 'Wandervögel.' Terrible to relate, a path had been cut over the mountains direct from Innsbruck, and most of the chamois had taken flight before this influx of strangers. Yet the Jagdhaus was exactly the same as ever, even to the pencil drawings on the wooden match-boarding to which we had all contributed in years gone by; even some miniature works created in 1873 by my artist sister Feo (then at the ripe age of twelve) looked as if they might have been drawn only yesterday. And a final meeting brought comfort to my soul; for the man in charge who came out, full of suspicion and demanding our names and our business, was somehow vaguely familiar to me, though he could not have been more than thirty at the outside, and I had not been there for thirty-four years. Those small, blue, deep-set eyes, which seemed to pierce through everything they looked at—that curling brown beard—that sturdy figure with the leather shorts and grey stockings: I suddenly 'got it,' and asked whether his name was Neuner. His mouth fell open: "Jo, jo, dös bin i'." He was the son of my old stalker David Neuner, and even his Christian name, Sepp'l, was the same as his uncle's. And when I asked after the last generation—whether

Haiss was still alive—the poacher-stalker who had been shot in the thigh by the Bavarian gendarme just over the border, and had dragged himself back in agony into Austrian territory—and fainted there ; and whether old Franz'l still wore trousers when he stalked ; and whether his uncle Sepp'l still padded his calves—then his features relaxed and he became quite genial. But although I told him my name he could not make out who the devil I was, as was only natural. And I left him staring after me with a puzzled grin on his puckered brown face.

## CHAPTER IX.

## CANADA.

NEXT winter—with a bit of luck in the way of leave—found me in rather a different part of the world, to wit, in Canada. My great pal in the regiment, Aubrey M'Mahon, had been appointed A.D.C. to Lord Stanley, recently appointed Governor-General, and the latter had most kindly asked me to stay at Government House, Ottawa, in consequence. In those good old days the return fare first class to New York in the winter was only £22 (think of it, you who now pay £70 or more for the single fare!), and I travelled in the *Celtic* of the White Star Line. Captain Parsell, a dear old man, was the skipper, and I remember his telling me of the collision, a year or two before, between the *Celtic* and the *Britannic*. The captain of the *Britannic* lost his head—for three seconds only, he said—and although he had about thirty years' service in the Company, he got the sack on his return home and was cast adrift, pensionless and characterless. No one would take him without a testimonial, and after six months in search of a billet he had to accept a place as second mate on a tramp steamer. Tough luck—but an example had to be made, and Parsell agreed that it was necessary.

The month at Ottawa was great fun. Skating and dancing, long drives in the snow, hockey, ice-yachting (on Lake Ontario) and carnivals on the

ice ; also the Montreal Carnival, where hundreds of white-blanket-suited figures with red caps and girdles stormed a huge castle of ice with rockets and Roman candles, and then adjourned to 'Windsor House' (the big hotel where we were staying) for drinks, harmonious choruses of old 'voyageur' songs and tossings of strangers in blankets. I fear that that Carnival is now a thing of the past—indeed, it had already disappeared by 1907, when I was last in Canada ; but its spirit still survives in the numerous ice parties by night, both fancy dress and others, which still form such a feature of the Canadian winter.

In the long ago days of which I am talking, figure and combined skating was the main amusement on the ice ; and great 'Quadrilles'—rather in the nature of Sir Roger de Coverley and country dances—used to be the fashion. But by 1907, in spite of a serious effort by the then Governor-General (Lord Grey) to reintroduce figure-skating, the latter had more or less vanished, its place being taken by hockey, hockey, hockey—and nothing but hockey, the devotees of the latter looking contemptuously down upon the exponents of the more graceful art.

But all the same, in 1889 we of Government House rather fancied ourselves at hockey. What with the elder Stanley boys and the staff, largely composed of soldiers, we got together quite a decent English team and practised assiduously on the lake at Rideaux Hall (Government House). Then in our pride we challenged the town of Ottawa, and had a desperate game on the town rink. Jos Bagot, Guise, M'Mahon, self, Eddie and Ferdy Stanley and a couple of other soldiers whose names, alas, I forget, were the British Army champions ; but we were hopelessly outclassed, and after a very fast game were beaten by 8 goals to love ! The Canadians, great hulking big fellows and frightfully rapid, had a maddening way of skating backwards, keeping

the 'puck' close between their feet so that you could not get at it, and then, when close to our goal, flashing suddenly round and whizzing it between our goal-posts. We only had one good chance during the whole game, and that was when I got hold of the puck and found myself in front of their undefended goal. I hit wildly at the puck, but was so exhausted that I missed it completely and fell flat on my back! The only thing that can in any way excuse our terrible defeat was that we had been accustomed, in the English way, to use light one-handed hockey-sticks and a cork bung, and were not a bit at home with the big double-handed sticks and heavy india-rubber puck that were then *de rigueur* in Canada, and have now, indeed, invaded all ice-hockey fields.

Lord Stanley, by the way, did much to encourage the national game of ice-hockey, and presented a magnificent challenge cup—the 'Stanley Cup'—to be competed for by the different hockey clubs. Its popularity may be judged by the fact that, when I was last in the country, a team came all the way from the Klondike to compete; and Klondike, though you would hardly think it, is further from Ottawa than London is from Khartoum!

But the lovely, keen, cold, still air of a Canadian winter was a revelation. It put fresh and tingling life into one; and although the thermometer was always below freezing-point and often below zero—we had 64 degrees of frost one day—we used to skate in our shirt-sleeves and were always overflowing with energy. The air, too, was charged with electricity, and we used often to amuse ourselves with lighting the gas without the help of a match. Quite simple; you only had to turn on the gas, shuffle your feet along the passage, and touch the gas nozzle with your knuckle; whilst if there were half a dozen of you, holding hands and shuffling, the spark was really terrific. In any case, if some-



body on the move, such as a servant at dinner handing the plates, suddenly touched your skin, there would be quite a noticeable little crackle.

Dancing there was in plenty, and good looks, too, among the ladies, especially those of the staff. Lady Stanley, herself of a very handsome type, was quite proud of the looks of her 'ladies-in-waiting'—Mrs Charlie Colville, Dosia (Mrs Jos) Bagot (a second cousin of mine), Miss (Kitty) Lister and Mrs Guise—and well she might be, for I have seldom seen a more beautiful little cortège than these formed at the opening of the Ottawa Parliament. The ladies of Canada, too, many of them pretty, were bright and charming, unaffected and full of *la joie de vivre*, both in and out-of-doors; and they enjoyed themselves vastly at the weekly dances in the big ballroom at Rideaux Hall. And anent this ballroom there is a neat little story to the credit of Lord Dufferin.

The latter, just arrived from his Vice-Royalty of India, was rather disagreeably impressed with the small size of Rideaux Hall compared with the splendours of Calcutta and Simla; and he was determined to build both a ballroom and a 'squash-tennis' court like the one he had invented in India. (This, by the way, the best game in the world, is played in a big covered court, very much like a real tennis court, with penthouse and *tambour*—this last represented by a gong or a tea-tray; but lawn-tennis racquets, net and balls are used, and you serve on to the penthouse and play off the side and back walls as well.) He accordingly applied to the Board of Works at home for permission and money to build them. The official answer was that he might build either, but not both. With much astuteness he started building both, and the money came to an end when each was half-finished. The story rapidly spread, as His Excellency intended, that the home authorities were too niggardly to do up the

official residence, and sarcastic and jeering articles appeared in the Press. The Board of Works stood it for some time, but eventually very shame caused them to give way, and they sent the requisite money to finish both! And it really was justified, for the tennis court came in thereafter most usefully for big functions and State dinner-parties.

My pleasant time there came to an end all too quickly, and I hastened home *viâ* New York to duty and to cramming for the Staff College. And whilst on the way home—in the *Celtic* again—I amused myself by writing an article on ‘Twenty-four Hours of New York,’ a harmless little thing, as I thought, in the lightest of veins, poking fun at the ways of the New Yorkers. It was published in the (now defunct) ‘Murray’s Magazine,’ and I thought no more of it. But when I returned to the ‘States’ as Military Attaché seventeen years later, it was brought up against me, and I found that I had, all unwittingly, mortally offended the worthy citizens of the capital!

## CHAPTER X.

THE STAFF COLLEGE AND ALDERSHOT. 1890-92.

IN those days the general opinion of the Army was still that Staff College officers were a set of shirkers who left their regiments with a view to an idle two years at the College, to be followed by loafing and well-paid jobs in the plums of the profession. I remember that shortly after joining the Grenadiers I had confided to a cousin of mine in the Coldstream that my ambition was to go up for the Staff College as soon as I had the requisite seniority (five years). He looked at me severely and said, "Well, I will give you one piece of advice, and that is to say nothing about it to your brother officers, or you will get yourself jolly well disliked!" I took his advice, but I stuck to my intention, and went up for the exam. as soon as I could.

Three months were spent in cramming at Lexham Gardens. Here we had the inestimable advantage of lectures from that brilliant but erratic genius, Tommy Maguire—a most amusing Irishman with the richest of brogues and an uncanny capacity for extracting the juice from overwhelming subjects like military history and strategy and forcing it into your head with the aid of funny stories, apposite illustrations drawn from a large experience of men, women and things, and a *memoria technica* drawn up with a reckless disregard of educational principles. He was the terror of the professional ex-

aminers, who were always trying to pose questions to circumvent his methods, but they very rarely succeeded.

I passed the exam. in July—largely owing, I fear, to my foreign languages; I only know that in the only two subjects in which it was not necessary to make half marks I did not get even quarter marks. Anyway, I was successful, which was the main thing, and I joined the Staff College the following January (1890).

Very different in those days was the College from what it is now. No blooming strenuousness—at all events not for the first year, during which we learnt again practically what we had already been taught at Sandhurst, though on perhaps rather an extended scale. Field-sketching was very much the fashion, and many days did we spend under Colonel ‘Billy’ Everett on five-hour or three-hour sketches of the country round, with due attention to contours, great accuracy of hachuring and careful colouring. It was very pretty work, and I enjoyed it much; but in reality it was a great waste of time, at all events as far as training for fighting in a civilised country was concerned, for there one would, of course, merely make an enlargement of the local Ordnance map. It must, however, be remembered that in those days our campaigns were entirely concerned with small wars, mostly in savage countries which had no maps of their own, so that a knowledge of the principles of map-making was perhaps essential. But it was carried much too far.

As for military history and strategy, besides a general knowledge of Hamley,<sup>1</sup> our studies were mostly based on the Franco-German War—after all, it had happened only nineteen years before. Colonel Maurice<sup>2</sup> was our professor, and his lectures, if you

<sup>1</sup> Hamley’s ‘Operations of War.’

<sup>2</sup> Later Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice (father of the present General of that name).

could follow them, were extremely good—almost profound; but they suffered a little from want of previous preparation, and from an unfortunate habit he had—doubtless common to geniuses—of saying French when he meant German, and east when he meant west—or *vice versâ*. But we had really a great respect for his brains, and the comments he made on our 'Memoirs' (the word 'Appreciations' had not yet been coined) were illuminating in the extreme.

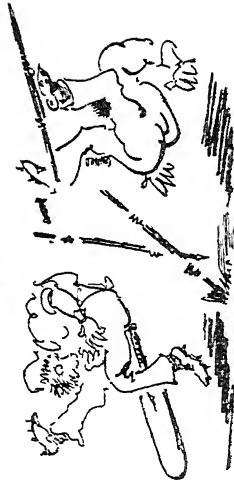
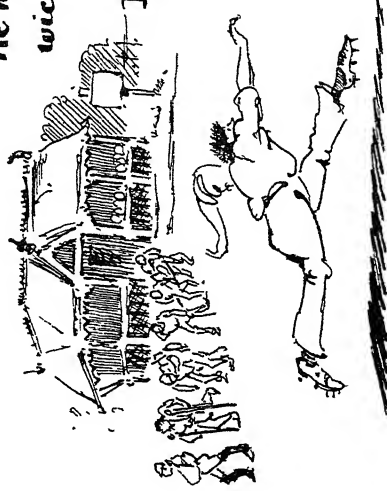
Field works, tactics, bridging and military law, with elementary 'schemes' illustrating minor tactics, billeting, &c., filled in the rest of our programme for the first year; but we had plenty of time to devote to games and other pleasant pursuits. We were indeed quite a sporting lot that year, and did well both in cricket and riding. Milo Talbot, for instance, in addition to passing first, both in and out of the College, was our cricket captain, represented the Sappers at racquets, was whip to the Drag, won our light-weight steeplechase and was second in the Aldershot point-to-point—a good record. Spencer Ewart, an old friend of mine both at Sandhurst and up the Nile—and later a close comrade on the staff during the Boer War and in the Intelligence Directorate—was a good bat though an unwilling runner; Johnnie Hardinge, fine rider and wicket-keep; F. Wintour, Reginald Pinney, George Aston (the 'Mariner'), Jack Cowans, 'Joey' Davies, George Younghusband, Lindley, A. Crawford and many others—we were a keen and merry crowd. So keen were we about cricket that those of us who were not good enough for the first eleven started a second club, which we christened the 'Owls' (after Minerva's bird), and played many of the local villages and clubs, and even Public Schools like Charterhouse and Wellington. The only contretemps I remember occurred in a certain village match, when it was a near thing; their last man was in, and our last

COUNT GLEICHEN. The world renowned MAN CATAPULT!!!!

He has Killed an Umpire!!! injured batsman &  
wicket Keep at one fell swoop!!!!

Actually destroyed a whole Pavilion!!!!!!

**DEFIES all OPPOSITION!!!!**



R.F. = a broken leg.

Scale 10 strides to 1 Mile

Part of a poster issued by various candidates for the captaincy of  
THE 'OWIS' (STAFF COLLEGE SECOND XI. (CRICKET), 1891).

Drawn by O. B. Shere (Indian Cavalry)



over was started at 6.29, stumps to be drawn at 6.30. By the rules of the game we were entitled to finish the over, and our fifth ball took the last wicket and gave us the match. Horrid noises arose from the surrounding partisans, and we thought we were in for a row. But I luckily noticed the village public-house close by, and by a stroke of genius we managed to induce our opponents to finish the argument there, with free beer for the lot. The result was eminently satisfactory, and we parted the very best of friends.

The Drag, too, was a great institution. Everyone of us, of course, had a horse (or sometimes two)—indeed he had to have one of his own, rationed by Government;<sup>1</sup> and everybody was supposed, and urged, to go out with the Drag. Some of the students had hardly ever been on a horse before, and many had never hunted; but to their credit be it said that nearly all turned up sooner or later on the line, and many were the glorious spills, with extraordinarily small resultant damage. But one fellow held out almost to the end—a bald-headed old officer of the West India Regiment, who, I verily believe, had never been on anything bigger than a donkey before. He used, with the utmost regularity, to fall off in the riding-school, whether on the flat or over the tiny fences there, and got heavily chaffed in consequence. At last we induced him to come out with the Drag. On the way to the meet his mount, a most inoffensive old animal, swerved slightly at the sight of a wheelbarrow, and Captain B. promptly dropped his reins and fell off into the road. Getting laboriously to his feet, he approached his steed—who was standing stock-still looking at him—shook his fist in the astonished animal's face and shouted, "You beggar, I'll stop your corn for this!" And he did.

<sup>1</sup> Nowadays a kindly Government provides the horse as well as the forage.



My own horse, for more than one reason christened 'Parachute,'<sup>1</sup> was a good-looking beast, and could gallop and jump when he chose; but he was not often in the mood to do so, and had, besides, a most unpleasant way of clicking his fore-legs together and coming down with a crash when I least expected it (speedicut)—either in the open field or on the road. So that I generally had at least two falls a day, and sometimes more. It was quite good training in the noble art of falling; but in consequence I did not often come in at the head of the hunt.

We had to do most of our outdoor work, especially during the second year, on horseback; for bicycles, though invented, were looked down upon with proud contempt,<sup>2</sup> and, needless to say, motor-cars and aeroplanes had not yet been thought of. Rapid sketching and road reports (scaling by the stride-length at a trot), camping schemes, attack and defence schemes, combined schemes and all the rest of them, which nowadays could be done comfortably in a motor-car, were carried out in plain clothes with the help of our horses; and often after a long day did we come back dripping and aching all over. We were also entrusted with drawing up railway schemes, many of which, if carried out in reality, would have entailed the most appalling catastrophes in men and material. We learnt indeed, if nothing else, that movements by train should only be entrusted to real experts. And towards the end of the second year we travelled farther afield, were shown big engineer and artillery work at Chatham, Woolwich and Shoeburyness, and made acquaintance with the mysteries and details of supply and transport—real eye-openers to most of us, who had not yet grasped the vital importance to an army of accurate and hard-working organisa-

<sup>1</sup> I had bought him from Shute (of the Coldstream).

<sup>2</sup> They did not become the fashion till 1894—Colonel Henry Stracey of the Scots Guards setting the first example.

tion in rear of the fighting line, and were up till then somewhat contemptuous of the non-combatant branches of the Service.

Our Commandant in those days was Colonel Clery, whom, to tell the truth, we did not often see, and who, I believe, knew hardly one of us by sight; he was, however, a charming and accomplished person, and was for ever bewailing his authorship of the Army handbook on 'Minor Tactics,' which, he declared, hung like a millstone round his neck. Lieut.-Colonel Rothwell, a fierce-looking person but quite harmless, was our instructor in military administration, staff work and military law; Lieut.-Colonel Cooper King, a pleasant little Marine Artilleryman, told us about field geology, fortification, forage and half a dozen other subjects of minor interest, and would give us a leg-up about almost anything, including military history; whilst Colonel Lonsdale Hale, who lived close by but was not on the Staff, was simply dripping with information about the Franco-German War. There was also a very dry German professor, an excellent Frenchman (M. Deshumbert) and a Russian, one M. Riola, whom Clery wanted to abolish on account of his few pupils, but who managed to cling on, chiefly, it was whispered, because Colonel Maurice found him such a useful opponent at chess. He was a good creature, though fairly casual as a teacher; and in order to make sure that his pupils should pass the final examination with credit—and thus ensure the permanence of his own billet—he used to resort to expedients at the thought of which, even now, I cannot help blushing.

Thus passed two intensely interesting and valuable years; and they finished with an inspection by the Duke of Cambridge, who, standing in the anteroom with his back to the fire, made us an excellent little speech on our work and duties as future Staff officers.

Immediately after I left the Staff College my dear

old father died—a heavy loss to us all. He had never been really fit since being invalided out of the Navy in 1866. Dysentery, which he had caught in China in 1857, was always hanging about him, and though an eccentric old homœopath, Dr Walker, had done him a great deal of good by prescribing a diet of lemon and rice, the evil was too deep-rooted, and his constitution was wrecked. Though of a full body he was, and always had been, an extraordinarily abstemious man, and ate and drank very little. I never could make out why he was not thinner, and can only put it down to the disease. Coffee, cocoa and tea disagreed with him, and the only thing he could drink at breakfast was champagne, which he had specially put up for him in tiny quarter-pint bottles. I mention this otherwise minute fact because certain ill-natured people, seeing his size and hearing that he drank champagne at breakfast, were kind enough to put it about that he drank heavily and suffered accordingly. This wicked lie I only heard of after his death, but could not succeed in fastening it on anyone. He died, after terrible pain I fear, of cancer in the mouth, on the last day of 1891.

That was a black winter in more senses than one. Influenza made its appearance in a virulent form, and carried off not only Prince Eddie, but my aunt Emmie Harlech, George Villiers and many other friends. To add to the depression, there was a dense black and yellow fog which lasted for nearly a fortnight before and after the New Year. I always remember that winter with horror.

After a short period as acting-adjutant at Caterham—where I relieved that cheery person, poor Dick Somerset—I was sent in April to Aldershot, where we finished our Staff College course by being attached for two months each to the other arms of the service—in my case Artillery and Cavalry—first to Lieut.-Colonel Hay's smart R.H.A. 13-pdr. battery

and then to the 5th Dragoon Guards (I regret I have forgotten the name of the C.O.). At intervals we were detached for Staff duty, and I worked for some time attached to Sir Evelyn Wood's Headquarter Staff. The whole four months were most enlightening, and we all learnt a great deal. Sir Evelyn was a great man—and stone deaf when he chose to be. It was most disconcerting sometimes, when one was discussing behind his back with a certain freedom and in an ordinary pitch of voice some point that had arisen, to have him suddenly turn round and make a sharp remark, showing that he had heard all we were saying. He certainly did work the Division hard, and he brought it to an unheard-of stage of efficiency for those days, much to the disgust of many easy-going C.O.'s who were not at all accustomed to that sort of thing; and he was ruthless in weeding out rotters. I remember on one occasion the water supply of some brigade in the field going wrong, and when he sent for the responsible R.E. subaltern we shivered at what was going to happen. The subaltern, however, was quite equal to the occasion. He smiled happily at the scowling General, and said, "All my fault, sir; I'll show you how I made the mistake," and proceeded to explain where his figures had gone wrong. Sir Evelyn was quite delighted, hardly wiggled him at all and said afterwards to me, "Good boy that; he'll get on. Nine out of ten officers would have tried to make out that it was somebody else's fault." And he was quick too. A gun-team was cantering past him during a field day when a horse put his foot in a hole and came down, throwing the driver under the wheels of the gun. Almost before we of the Staff had realised what had happened Sir Evelyn had stuck spurs into his horse and was on the spot, giving directions as to how to get the man clear and what to do with him. Luckily he had only a leg broken.

Sir Baker Russell—then commanding the Cavalry Brigade—was always at daggers drawn with Sir Evelyn, and was on occasion most insubordinate. On one hot field-day, I remember, Sir Baker had been told off as chief umpire to one side; but at the subsequent ‘pow-wow’ he had disappeared; and Sir Evelyn’s summing-up was consequently much impaired by want of evidence on several points. He was very angry, and as we rode back hot and tired after a lengthy day, through the cavalry barracks, whom should we see, lolling on a bench, *in flannels*, and listening to a band, but Sir Baker! With pardonable asperity Sir Evelyn asked him why he had left the scene of action without orders. Casually he answered back, “Oh, it was much too hot, General, and a most uninteresting day!” The G.O.C. looked as black as thunder, but said nothing. What the upshot of it was I do not know, but the story ran that in Ashanti, nearly twenty years before, Wolseley had directed Wood to make a dangerous and unsupported movement round the enemy’s rear, and that Wood had pointed out the probability of a disaster; on which Russell had volunteered to do it, and had carried it out with complete success. Hence the enmity between the two men.

Another character at Aldershot was Colonel Alleyne, Wood’s Chief of the Staff. Poor man, he suffered from a serious skin disease in the face, and was extremely grumpy in consequence. Hence, although a first-rate soldier, he was not exactly popular, and certainly his temper was sometimes unbearable. I did a lot of work with him, and found out that under his unamiable exterior he was a really good fellow, and we got on excellently together.

The A.Q.M.G. was a capital man, one Colonel Franklin, and it is really owing to his initiative that the food of the British soldier was so greatly

improved. A year or two before this he was commanding an infantry battalion; Sir Evelyn, who went into every detail concerning the comfort as well as the training of the men, called for a report and suggestions from all the C.O.'s of the Division on the feeding of the troops and how it could be improved. Men used then to be given nothing as free rations except a pound of bread and  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. meat (including bone) per day, and were docked of  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. a day for mess extras, which took the form of boiled cabbage and potatoes only, so that their menu was most unappetising and rarely varied. With one exception all the C.O.'s reported that the food was not sufficient, and clamoured for an increase of rations. Franklin, on the other hand, reported that the rations were sufficient, and he showed how, with co-operation, management and properly trained cooks, a very varied and excellent menu could be provided. Sir Evelyn was much interested, visited the battalion and found the men well fed and contented, and he introduced Franklin's system into the Division and made him A.Q.M.G. And after that a new era dawned for the men's insides.

The four months of Aldershot passed along all too quickly for me; August found me back again doing duty in London, and as I had been so long away from the battalion and was now, in addition, its junior Captain—having just been promoted after eleven years as a subaltern—it was necessarily not in the nature of things that I should get 'first leave' that year.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MOROCCO.

WHILST in the Intelligence Department I had, as I think I have already mentioned in a previous chapter, been told off to write a (military) handbook on Morocco, which at the time was but little known and was of little interest to the world in general. In accordance with Brackenbury's orders we had written and issued small handbooks on nearly all the countries on the globe; many of them came in most usefully thereafter. As regards Morocco, I found it an entrancingly interesting subject and, working with a will, managed to condense into the compilation most of the juice of a number of books in several languages—a small number, for surprisingly few people had written anything about the country. But I was never quite satisfied, for my authorities were often loose and contradictory, and I never knew which was telling the truth and which was not. So I always kept Morocco at the back of my mind, and was determined to go there if I had the chance—to see how many untruths I had told in my book.

One evening in the beginning of 1893 I was returning from a few days' shooting somewhere in Oxfordshire, and I bought an evening paper at Oxford. Therein I saw that in consequence of the failure of the recent treaty negotiations with Morocco, Sir West Ridgeway was going to be sent out on

a mission to that country to try and bolster up the British prestige that Sir Charles Euan-Smith had placed in jeopardy. My heart gave a jump; and I had the impertinence to get out at Reading for a minute and send Sir West (whom I did not know from Adam) a telegram asking him to take me—on the strength of my having written the Morocco book, and I followed it up with a letter from London. A few days later, to my supreme joy and immense astonishment, I received a letter from Sir West agreeing to take me as a sort of Staff officer and A.D.C. for a few months, if I could get leave from my battalion. Such was the reward of cheek.

I managed somehow to square matters with the authorities, and in April found myself at Tangier as successor to Bewicke-Copley of the 60th, Sir West's brother-in-law, whom luckily I had known at the Staff College and who had put in a good word for me. And there, or thereabouts, I spent a most delightful four months. Sir West and his handsome wife and roguish little daughter Vi,<sup>1</sup> aged seven or thereabouts, were kindness itself, and the time passed all too rapidly.

I was determined to see as much of the country as possible in the short time available; and as my stockbroking cousin, Seymour Ormsby-Gore, had come out with me for the trip, we spent the few days he had available in a little journey to Tetuan—a day's ride of thirty-five miles—and thence to Ceuta. Tetuan was then a beautiful little tree-shaded native town, with age-old buildings, hidden palaces and a mass of ever-changing colour in the market and narrow streets—the women, by the way, nearly all wearing those huge straw hats which give such a picturesque aspect to their sunburnt skins. Our Jewish host-to-be, the British Vice-Consul (Isaac Nahon by name) was fully occupied in marrying off one of his daughters, so he put us up for the night

<sup>1</sup> Now Mrs Tollemache.



in the green-tiled summer-house of an ancient and beautiful garden—far preferable to the stuffy little bedrooms that we should otherwise have occupied. Next day we rode along the somewhat monotonous sea-road to Ceuta, but were consoled by the delicious puffs of scent that greeted us from the masses of flowering gum-cystus that covered the hills to our left.

Ceuta was, frankly, a beastly place; and though I presented a letter of introduction to the Commandant from the Spanish Minister at Tangier, he took not the smallest trouble on our behalf, and was, in addition, somewhat insulting to us as Englishmen. I forget what the friction was about, but I reported it on my return, and H.E. Señor Ojeda, righteously indignant, apologised to me, and saw to it that the Commandant subsequently was 'hauled over the coals.' My chief recollections of the town are that the anchorage on the north was a mass of rocks and that on the south but little better; whilst the filthy little *posada* at which we had to put up smelt like an open drain.

Seymour had but little time to spare, and he went back direct from Ceuta to Gib., leaving me to pursue my return journey alone. It was delightful weather and pretty country, the latter consisting of rolling hills covered with sweet-smelling brushwood and intersected by small clear streams harbouring multitudes of frogs and water-tortoises. I stayed for the night in a village—or rather a collection of huts—in the heart of the Anjera country, and was most hospitably received by the local headman. The poverty of these poor natives was dreadful—nothing but a few head of starved-looking cattle and a dozen goats or so to a whole village; whilst there were but few patches of arable ground whence the inhabitants could pick a fragile sustenance. Their only other means of livelihood lay in the brushwood, which their women would cut down and carry

great distances into Tangier or into Ceuta to sell as fuel. But they hated the Spaniards, for the memory of the 1859 war still burnt fiercely in them; and their men, a wild tough-looking lot, with many fair-complexioned, red-haired individuals amongst them, all carried firearms of sorts, with a view to fighting either their neighbours, or the Spaniards, or even the troops of the Basha of Tangier, should he venture to drive them to desperation by imposing more, and yet more, taxes on this heavily burdened people.

Though as a rule strongly suspicious of foreigners, these mountaineers of the Jebala had an odd liking for English people, owing doubtless to the beneficent rule of our Minister, Sir John Drummond-Hay, in Tangier during many years, and to the hearty personality of soldiers and sailors who found their way over from Gib. on occasional shooting expeditions. There was little to shoot, as far as I could see, but an inquiry as to wild boar roused a glint in the headman's eye. "Oh yes, his men sometimes drove the hills for pig—but, alas! they were hard at work at the spring ploughing, and he could not spare any to beat for me"—and he turned sorrowfully away as I rode off. But I had not gone a couple of hundred yards before I heard a shout behind me—and there was the headman hobbling along after me (for he had a bullet wound in his thigh).

"I *must* come, Your Excellency, and show you where you can get a pig; I can't help it—the ploughing may go to blazes!" and he called up half a dozen of his men.

He was a good old sportsman; but I grieve to say that the beat came to nothing, and I had no time for another, being due at Tangier that evening. We parted with mutual regret, and I heard a few months afterwards that he had been killed in one of the numerous feuds indulged in by those reckless hillmen.

Those were the dear old uncivilised days of Tangier when there was literally not a single road nor vehicle in the whole country, and when, if you wanted to get from one place to another, you had to ride, or else go on your own flat feet. Even when you went out to dinner in Tangier you had to ride—ladies and all; and if it happened to be pouring with rain—well, so much the worse for your varnished shoes or the skirt of your frock; but nobody minded. And, after all, for the nervous and infirm there was the one celebrated sedan-chair, borne by two Jews and dating, probably, from the eighteenth century.

But it was a merry crowd—much more fun and much more amusement going on than nowadays, when the English element, then in the ascendant, has almost disappeared. Dances, pig-sticking, races, cricket, hunt-meetings and convivial reunions of all sorts succeeded each other in bewitching variety, and there seemed to be much more to talk about. How the Minister of a certain great Power had been caught smuggling rifles into the country; what price two other Ministers (of other smaller States) were getting for selling (unlawfully) ‘semsarships’<sup>1</sup> to certain Moors; whether it was true that Haj Bubkir, a British protected subject, had made his vast wealth by slave-dealing down south; how Raisuli had captured Mr Perdicaris, a Greek-American, and how he had come secretly by night to ask Mrs Perdicaris how best to invest the £10,000 that he was just going to receive for letting her husband go; how the daughter of another Minister was suffering from ‘exhibition-mania’ and had displayed her ample charms from the window in the costume of Eve; whether Walter Harris of the ‘Times’ was likely to be attacked in the lovely but lonely villa he had just built for himself on the sea-shore six miles outside Tangier—such subjects for conversation as these do not exist in these hopelessly prosaic days,

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, certificates of European protection.

when the most exciting topics are confined to the endless squabbles of French and Spaniards in the matters of the Conseil Sanitaire and suchlike bodies in the town.

The Corps Diplomatique was then fully represented, and its members seemed to have more individuality and interest than the cut-and-dried body of later days: d'Aubigny (France), a lively charming little man; Cantagalli (Italy), large and pompous, but with a great saving of sardonic humour, and his wily councillor Gentile, with his successful schemes for feathering his own nest; Matthews (U.S.A.), stolid and secretive, though well alive to his own interests; Ojeda (Spain), courteous and pleasant; Anspach (Belgium), *doyen* and honorary President of all the sports—chiefly because he had nothing else on earth to occupy himself with, there being not a single other Belgian in Tangier; Tattenbach (Germany), always on the look-out for insults, and his wife who was always called upon to sing at every party; the Duke of Frias, a good-looking and charming but absolutely penniless young grandee of Spain, who talked English perfectly, but was yet somewhat sketchy in his financial aspects as secretary of the Hunt Club; Crawhall, a really brilliant young artist who, handicapped by the possession of a rich aunt, only painted at intervals;<sup>1</sup> and many others whose names escape me. And in the Legation we had Eliot as Councillor (later Sir C. Eliot, Ambassador in Japan<sup>2</sup>); Herbert White as Consul (later Sir Herbert White, Consul-General in Morocco); and Athol Reader, attached, who subsequently transferred his fortunes to South America, where, if report is true, he took an active part in

<sup>1</sup> I remember a quite magnificent sketch of a jumping horse he painted on the tablecloth at the Hunt Dinner, with the aid of a burnt match, some mustard, some red wine and the dregs of a bottle of Worcester Sauce.

<sup>2</sup> Died 1931.

promoting and fighting in certain revolutions ; whilst our interpreter was (Count) Vismes de Ponthieu, a good little fellow, most willing and anxious to help, but of poor health.

The time passed most pleasantly, and my duties as A.D.C. were light enough to allow me to survey and draw up a scheme for the defence of Tangier ; for in those unsettled times it was quite on the cards that the tribes in the immediate interior might give trouble, though it is true that they would have been unwilling to combine to any great extent. Also, I had my first taste of pig-sticking at Hawara, about fifteen miles to the south-west ; but we were only four spears in camp and collected only two pig in the four days. My chief recollection is that of going head over heels, with my horse, into a stream almost exclusively composed of liquid mud, which I had rashly attempted to jump in pursuing a small pig. It took the others an hour and a half to get my horse and me out.

But perhaps the most interesting period was when I accompanied Sir West on a tour (by steamer of the Paquet Line) down the west coast, to inspect the Consulates at Rabat, Larache, Casablanca, Mazagan, Safi and Mogador ; and on the return voyage we crossed to the Canaries and back, spending a day or two at Las Palmas and Orotava, for this was the normal route for the steamer to take. At Casablanca, then a tiny native town, we picked up Allan Maclean, brother of the well-known Kaid Maclean, and he and I together disembarked at Rabat to investigate certain claims that various ' Mokhalata ' (British protected Moors) were making against the Moorish authorities, chiefly matters of cattle-stealing, theft and even murder.

There is no doubt that these cases were excellently founded, for we trekked to the places where they had occurred and interviewed the witnesses. But the difficulty was that the Basha of the province

of Larache and the Kaid of Habassi were personally and intimately concerned in these matters, for they had themselves instigated the crimes and drawn profit from them. It was consequently extremely difficult, in fact practically impossible, to get justice done. The Basha and the Kaid received us, of course, civilly and pretended to know nothing about the respective cases, but to be most anxious to help the cause of justice to the best of their ability. This, for instance in the case of the Basha, was shown by the fact that immediately after we left him, he sent a messenger to the chief witness to tell him that if he gave evidence for the Christians he would flog his, the witness's, father to death. And this he would certainly have done, for he had taken the precaution of seizing the father directly he heard we were coming. To cut a long story short, after innumerable delays and in very hot weather—the Moorish Commissioner who had been instructed to meet us having (intentionally) failed to turn up—the only results of our labours were that we managed to get one unfortunate man liberated from prison (he was probably put back there as soon as our backs were turned), and we collected some half-dozen witnesses and took them with us to give evidence at Tangier; for they rather naturally, one and all, refused to testify for us in Larache or Habassi, or they would never have seen daylight again. What the eventual result was I do not know—probably very little.

Here is an instance of how things were done in Morocco in those days.

A few months before we arrived at Larache the then Basha had set out to chastise a certain hill tribe, the Helserif, who had refused to pay the outrageous and impossible taxes demanded from them. By the simple expedient of retreating into their hills in front of the Basha's troops and then cutting off their retreat, the rebels had succeeded in killing half

the enemy and capturing the Basha, and him they roasted alive in a pit lined with white-hot stones. This sort of thing was not at all uncommon throughout the country; indeed, under the Sherifian system of government something of the sort was inevitable. For the immemorial system of raising money wherewith to pay the Sultan's troops and administer the country was to put up to auction the Governorships of the various provinces. The Bashas used to give sometimes colossal sums—say, thirty to fifty thousand pounds apiece for this privilege; and then they proceeded to recoup themselves—with something over—from their unhappy subjects. No man was safe from spoliation—nor was there any incentive to progress. For directly a man made a little money—by hard work, agriculture or other means—he was denounced and his money was taken from him; and bribery, corruption and crime were consequently rampant. The big man squeezed the lesser man, and so it went on down the chain until the poor devil at the bottom had no money at all—and even then he was taxed, and his land and cattle were seized when he could not pay. The alternatives were consequently starvation or revolt, and terror reigned in the land. So much was this the normal state of things, even under an enlightened Sultan like Mulai Hassan, that regularly every year (and sometimes twice a year) the Sultan went on 'harka,' usually in the late summer, when the crops were nearly ripe, in order to chastise his unruly subjects who could not, or would not, pay up; and his armies left a trail of desolation behind them.

No wonder then that there was great competition among the richer Moors, and especially Jews, to become 'protected' subjects of a European nation, and especially of England. But even that, as we have seen, was not always enough; and even when such claims by *Mokhalata* were especially important and well-founded, and diplomatic 'pressure' was

brought to bear on the Sultan and his Foreign Minister at Fez or Marrákesh, no answer was received for months. Nor is it surprising; for the Foreign Minister kept a special tablecloth into which he threw all correspondence concerning claims, and left them there until he had the time or inclination to attend to them, which was not very often. And as the Foreign Minister was himself changed every few months, and left these matters to his successor, the only surprising part of the affair was that they were ever attended to at all; but that again was not very often.

Much to our regret, Sir West and his family and myself left cool and delightful Tangier at the end of July, and after a desperately hot, damp and 'levanter'-stricken night at Gib., embarked for home—Sir West to take up his duties as Assistant Chief Secretary for Ireland, and I to rejoin my battalion in London.

\* \* \* \* \*

Almost as soon as I rejoined my battalion (the 2nd) we were sent on manœuvres down to the Berkshire Downs. I commanded No. 2 Company, whilst Colonel Trotter, an excellent and particularly good-looking man, commanded the battalion, with David Kinloch as his adjutant. We marched with three other Guards battalions all the way from London in bearskins and tunics, and jolly hot it was. Well do I remember our first march, to Hounslow, only eleven miles, but on a very hot afternoon. The men, as was their custom in those days, had prepared for it by filling themselves up with beer at the canteen, and before they had gone six miles they were sorry for it. Route-marching in those days was only carried out in the winter, so all ranks were in poor condition; and by the time that we reached our camp not only had several of our stout warrant and non-commissioned officers wished that



they had never been born, but a good many of the men had fallen out, and practically all the officers were carrying the rifles and kits of a number of others who could hardly keep up even for this short distance. Next day, however, things had vastly improved, and by the time we had got into our Berkshire camps we were in fine fettle. I remember, indeed, at the end of a morning's field-day, taking my company six miles home in eighty minutes, and feeling quite fresh at the end; but then the men were in white jackets and forage-caps—'drill order'—with no accessories but rifles, water-bottles and haversacks. What the operations were all about I cannot remember, but we were favoured with fine weather and had a very pleasant time, and thereafter we were sent direct to Dublin.

There the battalion came under the command of Colonel Villiers ('Simon') Hatton—a good soldier, but one not very easy to soldier with; and there I stayed for nine months' duty—and a good deal of pleasure in the way of hunting and yachting. Several of us combined to hire a little cutter (the *Guillemot*, alias H.M.S. *Gallipot*) at Kingstown, and great fun we had in her. We also hired a skipper, but as he was extremely inefficient, refused to go out when there was any wind on and was generally drunk when we particularly wanted him, we got rid of him and took on a cheerful youngster who said he knew all about sailing and all about the Irish coast. As a matter of fact, he knew very little about either, but we were fairly self-confident and mostly managed the yacht ourselves.

On one occasion we sailed up the East Coast with the intention of having a look at Belfast; and after nearly running ashore in Carlingford Lough we pursued our voyage during the night. About 5 A.M. Corry, who was then steering, called down to us in the cabin for a look at the chart, and we tumbled up (the correct expression, I believe) to

help him. All round us were rocks, horrid spiky black things sticking out of the water, with apparently no channel anywhere. But the devil looked after his own, for we got through all right; and when we subsequently woke our skipper he nearly had a fit, for he told us that in the memory of man only one boat had ever got through that place, and that was a smuggler being chased by a Revenue cutter.

We sailed across, too, to Stranraer Loch in Ayrshire; and as we approached the Scottish coast we looked out an appropriate chart. But the only one we found was a small-scale one of the whole of the British Isles, and that had a ragged tear just down Stranraer Loch. This was a trifle unfortunate, as a yacht sailing just ahead of us had apparently stuck on a sandbank or something bang in the middle of the loch. Luckily, however, I had come back to Ireland a month or two before *viâ* Stranraer and Larne, and had been struck by the very peculiar course taken by the steamer in the loch. And this I happened to remember, so we were saved once more.

And yet another voyage we undertook was one to the Isle of Man to pay a visit to my former chief, Sir West Ridgeway, who was now Governor there. It was a most successful piece of navigation, and the visit came off all right, except that one of our crew (now a highly respected Irish peer, who as far as I can make out is running all the business part of Ireland by himself) was so overcome after his all-night watch that he fell fast asleep at Lady Ridgeway's hospitable table—and snored.

Yachting in H.M.S. *Gallipot*, a little hunting with the Meath, a little fishing and a good deal of shooting with many hospitable Irish friends in various parts of the country, filled up one's spare time very pleasantly; and after a somewhat adventurous journey abroad, described in the next chapter. I

received, in May 1894, an offer from the D.M.I.<sup>1</sup>—as the Intelligence Department was then renamed—to take up the billet of Staff Captain there, with the probability of becoming D.A.A.G. in a year or two, the appointment to be for five years. I jumped at it.

<sup>1</sup> Directorate of Military Intelligence.

## CHAPTER XII.

## ON THE SPY.

BEFORE describing the work at the D.M.I., I *think* I might mention that I spent a month or so of my 'second leave' (January and February 1894) in rather an interesting way; and as we are now very good friends with the French, and the information is now obsolete, there is no harm in saying that I employed my time in an intelligence trip along their North African defences.

Franco-British relations were at that time in none too happy a state. The policy of 'pin-pricks'—especially over Egypt—was then in full swing, and it really looked at moments as though our mutual snarling might degenerate, or rather blossom, into something like war. The French had lately, it was reported, been building some torpedo-boat stations along the Tunisian and Algerian coasts, and strengthening their coast defences on the Toulon and Riviera front; and the Admiralty was not happy about it in view of the amount of British shipping passing through the Mediterranean. Accordingly 'the Mariner,'<sup>1</sup> my old friend of the Staff College, and at that time Intelligence Officer at Malta, was asked "what about it"; and the result of his cogitations was to ask me to come out and help him in a 'journey of investigation.'

Collecting the latest information on the subject

<sup>1</sup> Now Major-General Sir George Aston, K.C.B.

at the Admiralty and the Intelligence Division I hastened to join him at Malta, and together we took a little ship which plied along the African coast from Tripoli to Oran. We touched at Gabes, Sfax and Mehedia, making notes of the very little suspicious material we found there, and disembarked at Tunis, where we made a careful search for cable stations and suchlike along the shore. We could not find the place where the cable dived into the sea, for the only likely place, with hut and all complete, was on a particularly rocky promontory where a cable would rapidly have worn through, so we made arrangements with a trusty nondescript to hunt it down and let us know later; and he did—we had been at least a mile out in our guess! Then we transferred our operations to Bizerta, where we put up with the Consul, my friend Terence Bourke, whose house luckily overlooked all the batteries we wanted to know about; in fact, two of them were actually on his land.

We then took a couple of days' relaxation in the way of snipe-shooting in the interior, partly for sport and partly to put the local authorities off the scent. The snipe were poor, for there was too much water; but a day after wild boar was more exciting. Whilst waiting for the pig—if any—to break cover, I loaded my gun with ball cartridge; but to make certain that the bore of the gun was all right I took the cartridge out again and dropped a bullet down the muzzle of each barrel. Thank goodness I did so, for the bullet stuck in the muzzle of my left barrel, and I then found, for the first time, that this barrel was a 'choke' one. I grew scarlet in the face—I can remember it now—at my escape, and proceeded to load with No. 'A' shot—a local brand—instead. We had not long to wait, for a fine boar shortly broke cover within twenty yards of me. My first barrel brought him to his knees, but he recovered and bolted towards the scrub, followed by

my second barrel in the region of his *hinterland*. This seemed to infuriate him, for he turned, saw 'the Mariner' forty yards off, and charged him. Aston, with white but determined face, nobly stood his ground till the pig was within five yards, and then brought him down with a bullet in the head; but even then he required a second one through the heart before he was finished. We had his liver for supper—quite excellent—though we had to dig it out ourselves, as the Moslem beaters refused to touch the 'unclean' animal.

Next day on our way back we passed through a tiny village which, however, boasted a post-office; and here, hung up, we found a plan of the telegraph and cable-lines in the country. I tried to borrow it on the strength of an imaginary sick wife who was coming out to join me, and the clerk was quite complaisant; but we were so hungry that we had to have a meal first in the tiny inn, and when we returned for our plan the clerk had grown suspicious and refused to give it up. No matter, I got it later through a pretty English lady<sup>1</sup> friend of mine in Paris, who exercised her charms to such good effect that she extracted *two* copies—from two separate and susceptible officials in the post-office there.

Next stops Philippeville and Bône, with a harmless excursion to Constantine; and here we received rather a shock, for we read in the local rag that two suspicious-looking English tourists had been seen sketching the defences of Constantine! As a matter of fact there were no defences there, and I had only been making a rough sketch of a curiously picturesque natural arch; but nevertheless it put us on our guard. At Bône there was nothing in the way of naval stations that had not already been reported, so we moved on *viâ* Setit to Bougie, a delightfully pretty little town lying in a sheltered bay, where, it had been reported, a large torpedo

<sup>1</sup> Real.

station was being constructed. This proved, however, to be a completely false alarm, for the bay was so full of rocks that any such construction would have been out of the question. So as a last resort we climbed up to the semaphore station, little expecting that we should be admitted. The door was, however, wide open, and the man in charge proved quite friendly when we asked his permission to gaze at the lovely view from his roof. Half-way upstairs we saw a large framed table of flags hanging on the wall. "Secret naval code," whispered Aston; "get it by heart!" All very well, but how was I to get ten minutes at it by myself? So we proceeded all three to the roof, and after a few polite remarks on the beauty of the scene I excused myself to the coastguard, saying I wished to fetch my glasses, and left Aston to entertain him to the best of his ability in his very poor French. My task was not so difficult as it looked, for I speedily found that the flag colours went in a sort of sequence, and in a few minutes I had twenty-four of them by heart. But I could not get the other five, for 'the Mariner's' French was rapidly coming to an end, and the 'gardien' was getting suspicious and was coming downstairs. Their approaching voices luckily warned me, and I ran upstairs just in time to meet the keeper, smiling at him, and with more remarks on the beauty of the landscape. But he was not smiling at all—he was looking as black as thunder; and, disregarding my polite request to be allowed to see the rest of the station, he hustled us out and locked the gate. No matter, we had got the main thing, and a few minutes more behind a rock enabled me to transfer my '*trouvail*' to paper. (I might add that several months later a naval officer, working on somewhat different lines, managed to get the other five flags.)

Eventually we found ourselves at Oran, and here 'the Mariner' left me, after making arrangements for

me to send him any further material to a (false) address at Malta. But even then it was a little disconcerting to find, on arrival at my hotel and taking my room, that a strange official gentleman had been inquiring for me and for the number of my room. So I left my portmanteau open, with a harmless diary on top, saying what nice people the French were, and next day found that during my absence somebody had been at it! Needless to say that, owing to my precautions, there was nothing to be discovered by my visitor unless, indeed, he had looked under my—no, I mustn't give it away.

I spent several days at Oran, and sent in a full report concerning what I had found; but the awkward part of it was that there were two post-offices, French and Spanish. The former had a Bureau Noir attached to it, which opened suspicious letters, whilst the Spanish office had the reputation of opening bulky envelopes in the hopes of finding money in them, and, if there was none, of throwing them away. So I chanced the Bureau Noir. Aston was to have sent me a wire from Malta immediately on receipt of my report; but it was six days late in arriving at the French address which I had given him, and I do not mind owning that until it arrived I was extremely 'jumpy' when anybody suddenly opened the door!

I made my way to Corsica, picking up a little material at Bastia and Calvi, and so on to Hyères—of course under a false name. I had just registered in the hotel there, when suddenly a lady's voice called down the passage, "Hallo, if that isn't Count Gleichen!" and I turned to meet an old friend, Lady E——, *and* the manager's astonished face! Being French, the manager luckily accepted my hastily proffered explanation of there being another lady in the case; and, later on in the day, I was also lucky in discovering a brand-new battery of two big guns hidden in the wood commanding the



anchorage. Again, I was lucky in finding a married cousin of mine there with her three children, and consequently it was easy to make a picnic party to the Iles Porquerolles and, in spite of the forbidding notices in every direction, to walk with children and baskets right through two or three new batteries that were there being constructed, taking the while copious mental notes thereon.

Those were delightful days, and I can thoroughly recommend the sport of battery and cable hunting to anyone who has a taste in that direction, for the added risk (in this case of ten thousand franc fines and five years in a fortress) gives a delicious zest to it. But you must be well prepared, not only with the requisite technical knowledge, but with knowing how to dispose of the information when you have acquired it, and ignorance of this has before now led to trouble. Witness the case of a well-known officer<sup>1</sup> who made a series of notes on some coast defences in France, and on walking back along the desolate road to his hotel was met by two gendarmes, who approached him with forbidding mien. So bad was our friend's conscience that he pulled out his notebook, tore out two leaves, crumpled them into a ball and tried to swallow them! Astonished at this action, the gendarmes, who had only approached him with a view to getting a light for their cigarettes, solemnly came to the conclusion that there must be something wrong with a man who tries to choke himself with paper, and arrested him.

A somewhat comic episode of the same sort was that of the worthy Bishop (of Sodor and Man, I think) who was visiting his friend, Sir Lambert Playfair, then Consul-General at Algiers, some forty years ago. The Bishop was a great botanist, and in the course of his solitary excursions in search of flowers along the hillsides overlooking the sea he found

<sup>1</sup> He subsequently commanded a Division in the Great War.

himself, entirely unwittingly, inside one of the newest batteries. Up came the sergent de batterie, fiercely twirling his moustachios. "Qu'est ce que vous faites là?" he snapped. The Bishop looked up innocently from his studies, and said in his best French, "O, je regarde les flor." "Ah, vous regardez les forts?" shouted the sergeant, and he forthwith hauled the unfortunate ecclesiastic off to the *salle de police* in the deepest casemate of the battery. And there he had to stay till next morning, for Sir Lambert happened most unfortunately to be away that afternoon.

The consequences were in this case not serious; but in another genuine one they were, for incriminating notes were found under the mattresses of two foolish officers<sup>1</sup> who, in addition to not knowing how to dispose of their spoil, had been idiotic enough to try to photograph at night, by flashlight, a certain work in which they were interested! Of course, the sentry gave the alarm, and equally, of course, they were arrested and 'copped it fairly hot.' They were simply asking for it.

In yet another case the would-be seeker after information was arrested on suspicion, but nothing whatever was found on him or his baggage. After a lengthy investigation he was on the point of being discharged for want of evidence when he received a letter from home, written *on official notepaper*, commiserating with him on his arrest! That did him in completely, and he was sentenced to several years' imprisonment. (I need perhaps not add that the fatal letter was *not* written by anyone connected with the War Office.)

<sup>1</sup> Not military ones.

## CHAPTER XIII.

INTELLIGENCE WORK AT THE WAR OFFICE.<sup>1</sup>

It was in May 1886 that, as already recounted in Chapter VI., I first made acquaintance with the work that was to occupy me, off and on, in one way and another, for nearly twelve years of my life. The Intelligence Department, as it was then called, was housed in two small houses knocked into one, Nos. 16 and 18 Queen Anne's Gate, at some distance from the War Office in Pall Mall, it is true, but all the more appreciated by us for that reason. For we were a compact little body, working under the eye of that brilliant organiser and talented soldier, Major-General Henry Brackenbury, whose acquaintance, by the way, I had already made up the Nile in 1884. For I had been told off to make a road sketch and report on the country from Wadi Halfa to Dongola, and from Korti to Gakdul, and the result found favour in his eyes: hence, I believe, my appointment.

Brackenbury was a faithful adherent of Lord Wolseley—then Adjutant-General—and had many a time given him most valuable counsel in the matter of reforming the British Army, and especially its Headquarters Administration, which was then in a hopelessly inefficient and antiquated condition. In so doing I need hardly say that he had got himself

<sup>1</sup> 1886-1888, 1894-1899, 1907-1911.

seriously disliked by the Duke of Cambridge, then Commander-in-Chief. Everybody was devoted to this dear old gentleman, and no one wished him any harm; but still it was fairly patent to those who happened to think about it—not a very large body in those days—that the centralisation of all authority (for that is practically what it came to) in one person, however capable or beloved, was an impossible drag on the machine, and delayed its expansion or development to an almost indefinite extent.

The Duke was rather proud of being the drag on the wheel, and used to say that he had often stopped the coach from being run away with altogether. This was certainly true to some extent; for several of Wolseley's proposals, though sound, were perhaps of a somewhat startling nature in those days, and if carried out all at once would have been liable to dislocate the machine—at all events for a time. That a good deal of reformation was necessary is undoubtedly true, but the A.G. did not always go the right way to work. He was always in a hurry to get his measures and orders through, and in his contempt for 'red tape' used to take short-cuts in his correspondence, communicating direct with officials, and even giving them orders, without his letters passing through the prescribed channels; so that a department, for instance, might receive direct orders to carry out a certain matter which involved several other departments without the latter having been notified. The consequent confusion was dire, and only led to loss of temper on all hands, and to strained relations becoming still more strained. And in the middle of it Brackenbury, with his keen capable brain, would be called in by Wolseley to set matters straight, which he generally succeeded in doing, but not always perhaps in the most tactful manner.

I remember at some dinner-party in those days finding myself next to the Duke of Cambridge after the ladies had withdrawn. He very kindly asked me what I was doing, but when I had broken to him that I was working in the Intelligence Department he looked grave; and, leaning over and putting his hand on my knee, he said, "So you are under Brackenbury? A dangerous man, my dear Gleichen, a very dangerous man!" A curious thing to say to a junior subaltern about his Chief.

I was at that time (1886) in the 'French' Section, one Major Cooke of the Cheshire Regiment being my boss. What particularly struck me then, as always, was the immense amount of important things going on in the world of which hardly a word was said in the British newspapers. France was then engaged in a big and very troublesome campaign in Senegal with a local Napoleon called Al Mami Samadu (also called, if I remember rightly, Samory). Her success there eventually led to her conquest of West Africa, occupation of Timbuktú, &c., and to subsequent troubles with us on the Niger. Yet of all this hardly a word came through in the public Press. Wars in Madagascar and Tongking appealed rather more to the public ear, as there was a dusky Queen with a picturesque name fighting for her kingdom in the one and Hong-Kong was not far from the other. But though the French Colonial Empire was growing by leaps and bounds very little notice was taken of it, and parliamentary squabbles and Home Rule and parish-pump matters were deemed of infinitely greater consequence by the British public.

Even in 1886-88 we were receiving an immense amount of information. The Intelligence Department had only been started a few years before, in embryo form, under a Colonel Cameron; but Brackenbury set to work, reorganised, improved and developed it enormously and put it into close touch

with the Foreign Office (all of whose 'blue-print' and despatches on any questions affecting military or strategic affairs all over the world were put at our disposal), the Colonial and India Offices, the Royal Geographical Society and even the Cabinet on occasion. We were then a body of about sixteen officers and half a dozen clerks, who, by the way, had their work cut out in copying reports, &c., for there were no typewriters in those days. But we were zealous, and worked hard under the masterful supervision of Brackenbury, whom we both admired and respected. Besides the daily work of collecting information, largely from the foreign Press, we were set to work on compiling 'Armed Strengths' of all nations—even of those with whom we were unlikely to come into conflict. Some of them may have been unnecessary—I remember my first task was the 'Armed Strength of Portugal'—but they laid the foundations of much good stuff; and the subsequent amount of information and well-considered reports compiled on all armed forces and the topographical conditions of all countries in the world was really colossal. We had an excellent mapping section, producing its own maps and in touch with all the Geographical Societies (and their publications) in the world; and with the help of old Knox, the map curator, a weird, old, skull-capped civilian of infinite knowledge and sound science, there was very little stratego-topographical material on this planet with which we were unacquainted.

And here I may digress for a moment to point out the unreasonableness of people who will not think before they speak. During the final Khartoum campaign of 1898 we were roundly abused for not having issued detailed and correct up-to-date maps of the Nile from the Atbara onward to Khartoum. "That d——d Intelligence Division—thinks it knows everything—expensive mapping section costing Lord knows what—and yet the banks of the Nile and

names of the villages are all wrong in their maps, and so are the channels, and there's water in places where it's not marked, and *vice versa*—altogether they *must* be a rotten crowd, &c., &c."—one knows the sort of thing. I was personally attacked on the subject, shortly after the campaign, by an irate Colonel, who almost exploded with wrath at our shortcomings. When he had quite finished I mildly pointed out that (1) as the Mahdi and Khalifa had been rampant in the Sudan since 1883, we could hardly be expected to have maps later than 1883; (2) that the Dervishes would have been unlikely to welcome a British surveying officer with open arms during any of these fifteen years; (3) that even by 1883 the Nile had never been properly surveyed—the most recent map having been made by one Colonel Watson, R.E., about 1880, from a boat; (4) that the Nile channels change every year; (5) that the amount of water, and consequently banks, vary according to the season; (6) that the names of the villages vary according to the name of their headman for the time being; (7) that warnings as to probable inaccuracy were to be found in the margin of every map; and (8) finally, that my complainant ought to be very grateful for the detailed map of the ground round Omdurman which the Intelligence Department had provided,<sup>1</sup> and on which the battle had been fought.

The Colonel then subsided, but he went on grumbling.

Again, in the Boer War, the Intelligence Department was abused for not having detailed maps of the whole of the Free State and the Transvaal. Our maps, it is true, were shockingly bad for the most part; but those who abused us were apparently unaware that the country had never been surveyed. "Why then were Intelligence officers not

<sup>1</sup> I had had the good luck to find this map myself in an old 'Petermann's Mittheilungen' of 1868.

sent out to survey the country?" I hear someone demand. For the excellent reason, dear friend, that in the first place the country did not belong to us, and in the second that the survey was calculated to cost over £300,000; hence even the Boers themselves did not survey it. The only part of the country which *was* properly surveyed was the southern mining part of the Transvaal, carried out at the cost of one Jeppe, a mining millionaire; and although we knew of the existence of this survey, no maps had been issued, the plates were in Switzerland and the owners refused to sell at any price. We eventually got hold of some copies, at Johannesburg I think, and reproduced them, but it was rather late in the day. The other rough maps on which we worked were reproductions of rough farm sketches made by the Boers for land-owning purposes—hopelessly inaccurate, and omitting large portions of the country.

Whilst on the subject of South Africa, I should like to point out that our knowledge of the Transvaal and Free State, previous to the war there, was not by any means what it should have been. The British Colonial Section of the Intelligence Department had foreseen the war coming for a good two years before it came, and had made every effort to prepare for it. Over and over again Sir John Ardagh, then D.M.I., had pressed the Treasury authorities for money to enable him to send officers out there and start a proper Intelligence organisation on the spot. The Boers, during the two years previous to the war, spent rather more than £170,000 each year on 'Secret Service.' Sir John asked for £10,000. He was given, as a *great* concession, £100.

During this period the annual amount allowed to the Intelligence Division for 'Secret Service'—which included all officers' travelling expenses, as well as payment for information of different sorts obtained outside the routine area—was £600. The



result was that when officers were sent abroad to obtain information about their respective countries there was rarely any money to enable them to do so, and they had to pay for their trips to a large extent out of their own pockets. I know that when I went to Montenegro in 1899 I was nearly £80 out of pocket by it, and on several other occasions I only received an insignificant proportion of my expenses back. In an interview which I had with Sir Charles Knox, then Financial Secretary to the War Office, I happened to mention this. He was righteously indignant on the matter, and vowed he would see that it was righted ; but it was not.

And this £600 was by way of covering all (extra) information about the whole world, not only about Europe. No wonder we could not start anything big. Personally, I think it was a marvel how much secret information we managed to get hold of on this pittance. (After the Boer War it was much increased.)

When the Boer War began, our Colonial Section estimated the force that the enemy could put into the field, armed, at 53,000 for the Transvaal and 32,000 for the Orange Free State. When we got to Bloemfontein and Pretoria we found the official lists. We had over-estimated the numbers by only about 1000 for each. *But* the sequel must be told. After some eighteen months of fighting we had accounted, in casualties and prisoners and surrenders, for the whole of the 85,000, yet there were still some 10,000 Boers in the field ! It was not until some time afterwards that we discovered the reason why. It appeared that the Veld-cornets, in going round to the various districts to number the available men, had in many instances had their palms heavily greased to keep men out of their lists ; hence the discrepancy. It throws, however, a favourable light on the farmers' patriotism when it came to fighting.

I might mention that (Lieut.-General Sir E.)

Altham and (Field-Marshal Sir W.) Robertson—majors at that period—were in charge of the Colonial Section just before the war, and right well they did their duty.

Horses were another case of Intelligence work not being properly appreciated. When the Boer War developed into extremely mobile operations, horses were at a discount, and were sought for all over the world. The Remount Section, a branch of the Q.M.G.'s department, and a very small one in peacetime, was largely expanded and crowded into a tiny room or two in Victoria Street; they ought to have had at least half a dozen big rooms. Horses were sought for in Europe at first, and the choice very rightly fell upon Austria-Hungary, where thousands of beautiful animals, as everyone knows, are bred upon the Hungarian plains. Accordingly two officers, with, I believe, little knowledge of any language but their own, were sent to Trieste (!) with orders to buy horses in Hungary. They fell, it is needless to say, into the hands of the rapacious Jews there, who sold them hundreds of very inferior horses at the most exorbitant prices. These unfortunate animals naturally went to pieces on board ship, and on arrival in South Africa were sent at once up-country. Very few, if any, survived the first few weeks.

Yet we, the Austrian Section of the I.D., had sent the Remount Section before the war an extensive report on the whole matter of horse-breeding in Hungary, together with details as to where the best horses could be bought, the prices to be given, &c., &c.; and the Austrian Remount Department had particularly proffered their services in case we ever wanted to buy horses for the Army. The report had evidently never been read, or if it had, had been forgotten.

But a much more serious matter happened during the last war. In his book on the Dardanelles cam-

paign, General Sir Ian Hamilton states that before leaving England he sent his Staff officer to the General Staff at the War Office to collect information about the Dardanelles and Gallipoli Peninsula, and that the Staff officer returned and reported that there was none!

Now, I was in the Austro-Turkish Section from 1894-99, and had it under me from 1907 to 1911, and the amount of information about those places was very considerable indeed. We had fat envelopes and files by the dozen, simply bulging with information and references and plans about the Turkish forts and their armament, kept, with the connivance of certain foreign officers, strictly up to date—current, landing-places and topographical details of all sorts. I wrote to Sir Ian on the matter, but he could only repeat that that was the report of his Staff officer. I can therefore only imagine that either the Staff officer went to the wrong department, or that the officer in charge, being new to the work, did not know where to look. In any case, the upshot was most regrettable; but the blame cannot be laid on the work of the I.D.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE SUDAN AGAIN. 1896.

As will be recounted in a subsequent chapter (XVII.), the decision was come to in April 1896 that at last an end was to be made of the Dervish dominion in the Sudan. Fairholme was sent out from our section—I am not at all sure that he did not do it out of his scanty leave, as he happened to be in Switzerland at the time—to see what was happening, and he got as far as Wadi Halfa and a bit beyond. He then wired asking anxiously to be allowed to stay there as I.D. representative, but rather to my surprise General Chapman—then D.M.I.—refused. A week or two after ‘Fairy’s’ return, as the higher authorities at the War Office had then decided to send a War Office representative out to be on Kitchener’s staff, Chapman, knowing that I knew Kitchener well, and was, of course, thoroughly *au fait* with what had been going on, fixed on me, greatly to my joy, for the post, and I started forthwith. Arrived at Aswan I wired to Kitchener, according to local orders, for permission to proceed at once to Wadi Halfa and join him; but, much to my surprise, he did not answer for several days, and a repeated wire was not answered till nearly a week had elapsed.

I reached Halfa by the next steamer, and there I found, through my friend Wingate, his D.M.I., whom I well knew and with whom I had been in close touch for two years, that Kitchener had been

most suspicious about my appointment, as he had received no definite communication from the War Office about it. In fact, he thought I was going to be a spy of the War Office—which surmise, as a matter of fact, was a fairly correct one—and would report all his doings home. This was a hateful idea to him, as with his masterful character he intended that this should be a 'one-man show,' and he would brook no War Office interference. I had therefore to be extremely tactful and not push my nose into too many matters; but all the same, although I messed with the Headquarters staff, I was obliged, as a separate entity, to refuse his kind offer for me to be his guest. I have no doubt I was right; but although Kitchener was personally very civil to me, he became suspicious again, and never gave me a hint of what he was doing or going to do, whilst my inquiries in that direction were skilfully fenced with. Wingate, however, knowing both sides, told me as much as it was good for me to know, and in return I helped him to the best of my ability in drawing maps and collecting bits of information.

It was a weary wait at Halfa whilst men and supplies were being collected; but it was enlivened by a visit to our advanced post (under Hector Macdonald) at Abu Fatma (temperature 123° in the shade) and by the arrival of Girouard<sup>1</sup> as R.E. railway expert. I can well remember, on a roasting hot day, the door of the Intelligence Office being pushed open a little way and an unknown round and scarlet face, ornamented with an eyeglass, appearing in the aperture, with the introductory remark, in a strong Canadian accent, "Any you fellows got a drink here?" Ned Cecil of my regiment also turned up at this period and took over his billet of A.D.C., in conjunction with that cheerful person Jimmy Watson of the 60th, to Kitchener.

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Percy Girouard, K.C.M.G., &c.

As the advance against the Dervishes seemed to be some way off yet, I had a wire from home to go round to Suakin and report on the arrival of the Indian Brigade there, which was relieving some Sudanese and Gippy battalions from the district which were being sent to Halfa. Accordingly I proceeded downstream, and soon found myself, *via* the s.s. *Rahmaniyeh* and the Red Sea, at Suakin, where the Governor, Colonel Lloyd, a charming fellow, was kind enough to put me up in Government House. I was just in time to see the Indians disembark, and was, I own, struck by both the extraordinary amount of camp followers and baggage (including one regiment's silver mess-plate) that they brought and by their curious helplessness; for they seemed to expect everything to be done for them and did not even attempt to unload their own baggage or do their own fatigue work, but expected the one Gippy battalion left there to do it all. Both officers and men were a fine-looking lot, and would doubtless have given a good account of themselves in a fight; but the contrast between the mountains of transport and baggage and helpers and rations attached to a single Indian battalion on the march and the transport, &c., of a Sudanese battalion in the same conditions, practical but tiny and cut down to the bare bone, was amazing. One wondered what Kitchener would have said about it.

I stayed at Suakin for about ten days, including a visit to Tokar, veritably the most damnable place at that time of year for a garrison in the whole British Empire. Tokar lies in the delta of the Khor Baraka, a river which annually brings down a mass of the richest silt from the mountains and, having done so, discreetly dries up for the rest of the year. There are terrific winds here during the summer, which raise the fine silt dust in whirling clouds, day and night, and make life a burden; for the dust penetrates everywhere and everything

and, being black, sticks to your perspiring face, hands and clothes till it makes everything, including yourself, perfectly filthy. Six baths a day would not be sufficient to clean and cool you; and in any case you could not have them, for water is very short. So you sit and sweat and suffer; for it is almost impossible to go out of doors whilst the burning dust-wind is on, and it continues most of the night. I was truly sorry for the Indian battalion garrisoning Tokar; but it had to be, as there was still a considerable Dervish force under Osman Digna in the neighbourhood.

On the first night in the *Rahmaniye*h on leaving Suakin I was suddenly awakened by a loud bang just under my bunk in the stern. I jumped up; for the engines had stopped and there was a deathly silence. The captain was a stout Egyptian, and nothing was to be got from him except remarks on the greatness and wisdom of Allah; so I went to find my friend the Austrian engineer who, it had already struck me on the way from Suez, was always sitting yawning and smoking on deck instead of being below with his engines. It soon transpired that the propeller-shaft had broken, but that the ship was not leaking. So there we sat, like a lame duck on the water, for the night and most of the following day waiting for help; for we were only ninety miles from Suakin and more or less in the track of traffic. Five or six ships passed us in the course of the day, but they took no notice of our signals. So a boat was manned and sent off to pull all the way to Suakin for help. At last in the afternoon an Italian naval transport, with troops for Massawa, came up, and her we asked to tow us into Suakin. This she refused, but £2000 was the trifle she demanded for towing us to Massawa. The captain swore by Allah that neither he nor his company could pay it, and he did not want to go to Massawa. What was to be done?

The two Italian officers who had come on board quite civilly explained to me (excepting a temporary correspondent of the 'Globe' and my soldier-servant and the Austrian aforementioned there were no other Europeans on the ship) that they could not afford to do it for less, as they were due at Massawa at once with troops, but they would take our latitude and longitude and wire it to Suakin from Massawa. We agreed to this and wrote out the telegram, but then a difficulty arose; they would not take the responsibility of wiring it themselves—somebody must come with them to do it as they did not understand English. The 'Globe' correspondent did not understand Italian—would I come?

I need hardly say that I jumped at it. Anything was better than sitting on a stationary ship in the Red Sea in July and waiting for something to turn up, and, besides, I should be able to see Massawa and the Italian troops there, and they had offered me a free passage back in their ship to Suez. So, leaving my servant Herbert on board with all my baggage, convinced that we should meet again at Suez in four or five days, I took a handbag and went on board the transport, and by the following evening we were in Massawa and I had despatched the telegram.

There was little of interest to see at the Italian base. It was infernally hot, the only cool hour of the twenty-four being from 12 to 1 in the middle of the day, when a cool sea-breeze arose, and in two days we were steaming back to Suez. The Italian officers were very kind, and the only embarrassing thing at meals was that whenever I spoke to anyone in my somewhat halting Italian all the rest of the table stopped their chatter in order to hear what I had to say. Added to this I had a strange disease—I *could* not keep awake, and my skin became mottled all over like Castile soap! I expect it was some form of heat-stroke.



I did not see the *Rahmaniyeh* anywhere in harbour at Suez, but ran ashore at once to the agent's house, to be met with the alarming news that the boat had not been heard of—she must have sunk with all hands! It appeared that within a few hours of the *Rahmaniyeh's* boat and my wire reaching Suakin no less than five steamers were cruising about where she had last been seen, but there were no signs of her; and meanwhile the agent's garden was full of howling relations of the sixty Egyptians and Levantine Greeks who had been on board. It was a crushing blow to me too, for I thought I should never see my faithful servant and baggage again, and I blamed myself severely for not having insisted on the captain accepting the Italian terms at whatever cost. So I departed for Cairo in sorrow, and wired home for orders as to what they wanted me to do next. Meanwhile, much to my annoyance, I had missed the first little battle of Firket, and the Dervish force was falling back; so, as there would probably be a long wait before the next action, the War Office ordered me home.

On my way to Alexandria I bought a paper, and to my great joy found a paragraph in it saying that the *Rahmaniyeh* had been discovered and was being towed back to Suez. And so it turned out, and my faithful Herbert and baggage arrived in England a fortnight afterwards.

What had happened was this: the steamer had drifted on unknown currents over to the Arabian coast, and when the crew and passengers proposed to land to get help, it was found that not one of the boats would float—they had all (except the one sent to Suakin) warped with the heat, not having been in the water for years. Then the twenty emergency rifles and ammunition were overhauled by Herbert, and he found that none of the bolts would work—all heavily stuck up with rust—nor could the bayonets be fixed—had not been oiled for years. Then Her-

bert overhauled the water supply; and though I had made a particular point of this before leaving, and the steward had taken me to the water-butts and sworn to me that they were quite full, there was hardly any water in them. The same with the food for passengers—very short indeed; and the crew had literally no food at all, having expected to get some more at Jidda. So Herbert took command, seized the keys of the storerooms and doled out the rations and water himself. Then the steamer had drifted back again somewhere, the currents being quite unknown, and finally an Indian tramp had taken them in tow and brought them to Suez. I am glad to say that the agent of the Khedivial Company, whose business it should have been to see to all these faulty details, received the ‘Order of the Boot,’ whilst my good Grenadier was heartily congratulated on all hands.

## CHAPTER XV.

ABYSSINIA. 1897.

By the beginning of 1897 it had become evident that Abyssinia might become an important factor in our fight with the Dervish dominion, for already certain pourparlers were being reported as taking place between the Khalifa and the Emperor Menelik. It is true that King John, Menelik's immediate predecessor, had been killed and his troops driven back by the Dervishes in a terrific battle at Gallabat in 1889 ; but the attitude of the Abyssinians on the Blue Nile was even now somewhat of a mystery, and it was not impossible that the wily old Emperor might make terms with the ruffians on his border which might not be entirely to our advantage in the present campaign. It was therefore needful—and all the more so since French, Russian and other nationalities were trying to gain Menelik's confidence, and already had representatives at his capital of Addis Ababa—that we should try and make friends with Abyssinia, and show Menelik that it would be to his advantage to be on good terms with us. A Mission was therefore decided on by the British Government, to be headed by Mr Rennell Rodd, then Councillor to the Agency at Cairo, who, by good luck, happened to be an old friend of mine, dating back to Berlin in 1888. An Intelligence officer to the Mission was wanted, and as I thought I necessarily, from my work in the I.D., knew as

much about Abyssinia and the Sudan as most people, I put in an application through my Chief to form part of the Mission, and was delighted to hear, shortly afterwards, that I had been accepted.

The Mission was formed at Cairo, and consisted of Rodd, Wingate as 2nd in command, Pinching Bey (of the Sanitary Department there) as Medical Officer, Ned Cecil (Ordnance), Cis Bingham of the 1st Life Guards (brother-in-law to Rodd—Posts), Swaine (a sapper who was thoroughly conversant with Somaliland—Transport), myself (Intelligence and Water) and last, but certainly not least, Captain Speedy. Speedy was a gigantic elderly man of about sixty, with spectacles and a long beard, who dated back to the Abyssinian War of 1868, where he had been at one time bosom friends with King Theodore of evil memory. He could talk a certain amount of Amhāric, and was one of the very few Englishmen who up to that time had lived in Abyssinia. He still possessed the robe of honour, spears and gold-mounted shield that Theodore had given him, and to see him capering about on a big grey horse dressed as an Abyssinian, spectacles included, was a sight for the gods. I should, however, add that, rather to his disgust, he was only once allowed to appear in this kit, though he took it with him to the capital.

As Egyptian, or rather Syrian, secretary we had Shahin Bey, a nice capable little man, one of Wingate's favourites; and as Commander of the Escort, consisting of twenty Aden troop sowars, came Jemadar Mahmud Khan. By the time we had disembarked at Zeila and collected English and Hindu servants, Abyssinian interpreters, Somali camelmen and servants, and Arab and negro water-carriers, we were rather a mixed crowd. But Harrington,<sup>1</sup> our Resident at Zeila, worked nobly in collecting transport, and by the 20th of March we

<sup>1</sup> Later Lieut.-Colonel Sir John Harrington, K.C.S.I., our Minister at Addis Ababa.

started, completely equipped, over the scrubby Somali desert headed for Harar and the Abyssinian hills.

It took ten days over the hot stony plain to get to Gildesa, at the foot of the hills, the equivalent of which is now done in one night by the Jibuti railway ; but once there the type of country changed amazingly. We exchanged here our camel transport for donkeys, and two days farther took us up to the Abyssinian plateau, the road winding up through charming hilly country and forest, punctuated now and again by troops of lion-maned baboons, leopards, bees, hyenas and a variety of interesting birds. As we mounted the air grew cooler, and at last we emerged into a rolling country covered with juniper, blackberry bushes, jasmine, honeysuckle and flowering shrubs—it was like being transported into another hemisphere. Here we were received in great state by the local Dejasmach, escorted by mounted crowds of Abyssinian worthies dressed, over their white shirts and trousers, in crimson-barred *shammas* or bright scalloped cloaks of velvet and silk. They carried silver or gold-covered shields and the inevitable rifles, and wore hats of every shape, ranging from big Terai grey hats or bright-coloured silk kerchiefs to purple velvet brimless top-hats covered with gold embroidery, or even to the picturesque aureoles of lion's-mane hair which distinguished the greater warriors or hunters. It was a wonderful sight.

Next day we dressed ourselves in our best uniforms and were presented to Ras Makunnen, ruler of Harar and own nephew to Menelik, a charmingly delicately built person of excellent manners and soft speech ; and at Harar we camped for six days, collecting mules, dining at intervals with Makunnen and making the acquaintance of the local strong drink, *tej*, a sort of mead, tasting, when well made, something like a sweet Madeira.

On our return to England I wrote a full account of the Mission, with numerous illustrations,<sup>1</sup> and to it I would refer any readers interested in the details of our journey. Sir Rennell Rodd has also described it fully in his recent *Reminiscences*; <sup>2</sup> so it is hardly necessary to provide another long account of it here. I will therefore confine myself to giving a very general description of what we did, enlarged by a few excerpts from my book.

We had a terrible time in getting away from Harar. We had bought a large number of mules for our transport and hired a few more, but we were still short; and though Makunnen promised faithfully to make up the number, they did not turn up till the very last moment, and then only after the most strenuous exertions on our own part. And when it came to loading up, mules were seen careering all over the country with their loads kicked to blazes, their drivers having disappeared for a last drink, or being quite incapable of managing them. Men were rushing about, all shouting or swearing in different languages—Hindustani, English, Arabic, Swahili, Galla, Somali, or Amhāric. It was pandemonium personified, and even Makunnen's persuasive personality was unable to quell it or to bring it into order.

No matter, we got off at last on a very short march, and shook ourselves together fairly well at the first camp; but during the whole journey the question of mules and how to get all the loads on to them was a perpetual trouble. And here again the amount of baggage and transport required for the Indian troops, although they only numbered twenty-one all told, was colossal. I overhauled it once, when we were in the direst need for transport, and found that they had two full mule-loads of—soap! and it almost caused a mutiny when I ordered

<sup>1</sup> 'With the Mission to Menelik' (Arnold, 1898).

<sup>2</sup> 'Social and Diplomatic Memories,' Vol. ii. (Arnold, 1923).

them to keep but one bag and throw away the rest.

The country was magnificent. Huge park-like spaces, dotted with big trees, forests of beautiful cottonwood trees with scarlet flowers, alive with monkeys and pale blue butterflies; open rolling grass downs, with lovely panoramas north and south; thickets of flowering shrubs full of all sorts of birds, from big ground hornbills and guinea-fowl down to gaily-coloured starlings and bee-eaters. Once we saw a troop of ostriches; and we killed a big python, and saw spoor of elephants and kudu and, on the river banks, of hippo, rhino and crocodiles, whilst hyenas and jackals howled at night. But though well provided with rifles, we had no time for shooting big game, and had to restrict ourselves to small game for the pot. The native water arrangements were abominable, and though this was the main track between Harar and the capital, not a single well had been dug, and water had to be collected as a rule from muddy pools in which cattle and animals of all sorts had drunk and stood.

The Fantallé Desert, for which we had to carry water, took nearly two days to cross, and the Hawash river, lying at the bottom of a deep cleft, also offered some difficulties. But once across these and on higher ground we came on to barer and stonier country, which lasted up to Addis Ababa. Altogether it took us forty days to reach the capital from Zeila, divided thus—

Zeila to Gildesa	. 10 days
On to Harar	. 3 „
Stay at Harar	. 6 „
Harar to Addis Ababa	21 „
Total,	40 days, including 33 days' actual marching,

and this was, we found afterwards, quite a record journey for a large caravan. But we beat even this by saving more days on the way back.

Arrived on the grassy downs outside the capital, we were welcomed by M. Ilg, Menelik's Swiss Foreign Minister, and proceeded quietly next day to the huts which had been told off for us, for we were two days before our time, and Menelik, being engaged in a religious festival, had sent his excuses for not being able to welcome us in person. But on the following day we had a grand reception.

With the Affa Negûs ('Breath of the King,' *alias* Lord Chief Justice) at their head, an escort of quite eight thousand men, all armed with rifles (and generally swords as well), came to fetch us, and bore us along with them up to the Gebi, or King's Palace, which was surrounded by a tall wooden paling. Inside the enclosure was a most quaint sight—the King's Drums. About twenty negroes, clad in tall red caps and red shirts starred with black, sat on the ground, each with a big kettledrum in front of him, and this he thumped in cadence with a club in his right hand and a switch in his left, thus producing two notes from his drum—most barbaric yet attractive music.

We were received in the main hall of the Gebi. Menelik—a heavily-built, very dark-complexioned potentate, with a bearded face somewhat reminiscent of a good-natured gorilla, but most intelligent withal—sat cross-legged under a canopy. His head was bound with a white muslin kerchief partly covered by a turquoise-blue fillet, and from under his purple velvet cloak ornamented with large silver plaques were visible his short white linen trousers with bare ankles and feet. A number of Europeans stood by his side: Prince Henri d'Orléans (who was on a mysterious visit to the country, not unconnected with designs concerning the Upper Nile), Vicomte de Poncins (a friend of his, pleasant and a sportsman), M. Ilg, of course, M. Bonvalot and several other Frenchmen, either officials, travellers, or merchants, and Colonel Leontiev, with a couple of



Cossacks, self-styled envoy from the Tsar on a 'mission' which I fancy had rather more to do with his own interests than with his Sovereign's. And on the Emperor's left were numbers of native Princes, Rases, Dejasmachs, Kanyasmachs, Gerasmachs, high generals and officials, dressed for the most part in gorgeous velvet hats trimmed with gold, or lion's-maned aureoles, with gold or silver decorated shields and brilliant-coloured cloaks of velvet or leopard skin. It was, indeed, a magnificent sight.

Menelik bade us be seated; and after polite speeches on both sides we were introduced separately to the monarch, who greeted us with pleasant smiles, and told Rodd he was much looking forward to the private audiences he was going to grant him on political and treaty matters. Thereafter we were conducted back with honour and the same enormous escort as before to our own quarters.

And in Addis Ababa we stayed for seventeen days, during which time Rodd succeeded in negotiating and signing a treaty on the promotion of trade, free passages, boundaries, transit of arms (except to the Dervishes, whom Menelik declared to be enemies of his Empire) and so on. We also assisted at various functions: a dedication of a new church to St George; a feast to ten thousand warriors in the palace; presentation of our presents to Menelik (largely good furs, silver plate and rifles); the feast of St Raguel—a church at the top of Entotto hill four miles off, where the priests performed a solemn dance in memory of David dancing before the Ark—most curious; and we were presented to the Empress Taitu, a vast lady of strong determination and a wonderfully fair complexion—what we could see of it, for she kept most of her face covered. She barely acknowledged the British presents, which included a diamond and emerald necklace, a silver looking-glass, silks, &c., with a slight bow; but was much interested in Queen Victoria and her wonderful

activity at the age of seventy-eight; and she closed the audience by entrusting us with a quaint old golden necklace for Her Majesty, a copy of the one which the Queen of Sheba had worn when she made King Solomon's acquaintance.

It was Easter-time during our stay, and the Abyssinians, who are very strict about not eating during Lent as long as the sun is in the sky, let themselves go at Easter, and feasted for quite a week. Their Easter Sunday is seven days behind ours, and their year, which is seven or eight years behind ours, begins on the odd date, 10th September. But they are extremely hazy about dates, and hardly anyone we asked agreed with anyone else as to the correct date of the day, month or even year. In spite of Menelik's endeavours there is practically no education in the country, and the priests see to it that there shall be none except the superstitions that they themselves inculcate—otherwise they would lose their power. Everything is happy-go-lucky; there seems to be no organisation or forethought about anything. Marriage is also a chancey institution. When your children arrive at the ages of twelve to fourteen, you can acknowledge any that you like as your own, and those you do not care about are left to shift for themselves as best they can, generally becoming servants or followers of different chiefs or their wives. Divorce is also quite an easy affair—generally a case of 2s. 6d. or 5s. to the nearest priest, who for that sum will pronounce you unstuck.

As for trade, we were woefully disappointed with the market, which was not opened till eight days after Easter. Not a curio nor a quaint article of any sort was to be obtained: no silver, no embroidery, no good weapons or pottery or anything showing the influence of arts and crafts. Nothing but the commonest of articles and provisions: grain, grass, sheepskins, fuel, common American,

Manchester or Indian cottons, and trumpery German and Italian hardware was to be seen, and little of native manufacture except very ordinary swords and shields, a few rough spearheads and some native woollen cloth. "Where's the bazaar?" we demanded of our interpreter. "Bazaar? There's no bazaar; this is the bazaar." "But surely you must have some tradesmen, some industries, some manufactures?" He only shook his head and said, "There are some merchants here—like those you see walking about buying and selling—but nobody manufactures anything." "But if you want a bed, or a table, or, say, a plough, what do you do?" "Oh, you walk about the town until you hear of somebody who has one to sell. Oh yes, it may take weeks before you get what you want, but what does that matter? There are a few Indians and Armenians who make what they are told to make; but they never have anything to sell." And this we found was absolutely true. Whilst if you wanted a house built, that would take an eternity. Even if you found a hut-builder and gave him careful instructions, he would not begin for weeks. After a time his men would set leisurely to work, and after a week would demand their wages. This you would give them, and they would go away to spend it—not returning for a week or a month; and to induce them to go on with their work you would have to give them money—and they would stay away to spend that.

The currency also was difficult to tackle, for in spite of a very modern Abyssinian coinage Maria Theresa dollars were as a rule the only coins accepted; whilst the small change was represented by cartridges (full or empty) and bars of salt, which latter would deteriorate in value, as it was the correct thing on meeting a friend to give him a lick of your bars. Nor was it easy for a European merchant to do much trading with the country; for

Menelik was in the habit of encouraging traders to open up lines of commerce with their country, and then, when the stuff was beginning to come in, he would put heavy duties on all material which was not addressed to himself ; so that he rapidly became the biggest monopolist trader himself, and ruined the merchants who had shown him the way. Altogether the country was not yet in a high state of economic development, although, judging by the number of European nations which were already beginning to jostle one another in their efforts to get into Menelik's good graces, one would at first have thought that Abyssinia was an open territory which only required European exploitation in order to develop into a highly civilised nation.

We also went one day to pay our respects officially to the Abuna (Archbishop) Matthaïos, who lived amicably in the same house with the late Abuna Petros (or Butros), who had been recently deposed by Menelik. Both these worthy prelates were Egyptian Copts ; for the Abuna of the country must be a Copt consecrated by the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, and once he has arrived in the country he must never leave it. Pinching, who talked fluent Arabic, became a great favourite with the Abuna, for he knew many of his friends in Egypt, and used to entertain his hosts with spicy and amusing stories as to the goings-on in Coptic circles in their far-off home. And as a token of their friendship they presented Pinching with a fine silver crutch, such as the priests lean upon (fitting it under the arm-pit) during their interminable services.

At last, much to our regret, the time came for departure. Our mules had by this time largely recovered their condition, and we had to make haste to get out of the country before the descent of the heavy rains soon due. On the 14th May, therefore, the treaty having been settled on and fair copied, we went officially to get it signed and to

take leave of Menelik. Just before he signed, we invested him with the G.C.M.G., an honour he had not expected, and with which he was much pleased. He returned the compliment by presenting us with various classes of the Star of Ethiopia, and also with a horse apiece.

Next day, accompanied by a vast crowd of soldiery and many Rases and Generals and, above all, by the King's Drums, mounted on mules for the occasion—an unprecedented honour—we left the capital and turned our heads south-eastwards. Again we had trouble with our transport, for many of the promised mules did not turn up or were in such bad condition that we could not use them; and with our food and forage, for, in spite of all our forethought and numerous letters to authorities on the road, saying exactly when and where we should encamp so that supplies should reach us without fail, we found (afterwards) that one of the Fitauraris on the road, expecting that we would turn aside and stay with him—which we had never had any intention of doing—sent word down the road that we should be a day later than we had said. Consequently for seven days there was no food for our men or animals, except what they could scratch up locally, which was extraordinarily little. And if you gave the headmen money for their men to buy food with, they put it in their own pockets and their men went hungry. I must say the men were very good about it; they were used to starvation and to being cheated, and except for a slight mutiny or two and one of the headmen being stabbed in the kidneys—I have no doubt he deserved it—they took it very calmly. However, when we reached Worabili again, in Ras Makonnen's province, we found plenty of food there; and we arrived at Harar on 31st May, less than sixteen days out from Addis Ababa, and easily a 'record' for a big caravan.

We stayed four days at Harar for Rodd to finish

some political and frontier arrangements with Makonnen, and then hastened on to Somaliland and Zeila. It was terribly hot on the plains, but we marched in the evening and by night ; and luckily there was plenty of water in the wells, though it was supposed to be the driest period of the year.

Eventually we reached Zeila on 14th June ; and a few days later we had left Aden, bound for home and civilisation after an extraordinarily delightful and interesting trip.

## CHAPTER XVI.

MONTENEGRO. 1899.

IN the spring of 1899 we happened to find, in the I.D., that we did not know as much as we ought to of the country, army, or ruler of Montenegro; so I went there in order to find out. I was lucky in securing as fellow-traveller that most charming of companions, Harry Cust, who, never in the best of health, died some eighteen years later during the Great War. But on this occasion, though barely recovered from some dangerous internal complications which would have killed most men (and would have killed Harry if he had not consulted that wonderful diagnostician, Dr Reyer of Dresden), he was in his best form and determined to enjoy himself; and enjoy ourselves we did, amazingly.

Starting from Venice, after I had cut down Harry's travelling impedimenta from eight portmanteaux and suit-cases to three—for he carried nearly as much baggage as an Indian battalion—we took steamer at Trieste and proceeded down the beautiful coast of Istria and Dalmatia, touching at all the little ports on the way. There is no need here to describe these lovely little towns, so well known to passengers who, in these post-war times, make the spring trips on the gigantic liners now so much in favour. In those days, of course, the trip was seldom made, and the Dalmatian coast but little known.

We landed at Metković, at the mouth of the

Narenta river, and a short journey through pretty country and along a narrow mountain cog-railway took us *viâ* Mostar and the Herzegóvina to Sarájevo of evil memory, and there we stayed for three or four days whilst we made our arrangements for the journey to Cétinje. The Austrian authorities made us very welcome, and though Baron Kallay, the wise administrator of Bosnia, to whom we had letters, was away, we had no difficulty in securing a carriage to take us to Hum, the northernmost Montenegrin post, and arranging for riding- and pack-horses to take us on thence to the capital.

It was a wild and mountainous country that we now traversed, the road being nothing more than a rocky footpath, on which even our surefooted animals found some difficulty in keeping their legs. There were very few inhabitants, but all that we met were most courteous and made us welcome at the few small farmhouses where we passed the nights. Having been warned of the poverty of the country in the way of supplies, we had brought our own food, and it was lucky we had done so, for there was practically nothing to eat in the whole country. Here and there a few tiny earth basins in the rocks bore a scanty crop of wheat, and round the rough stone hovels a few skinny sheep and goats and chickens were to be seen, but that was all. At one farm, typical of all the rest, where we put up, we succeeded in buying a few eggs and getting a slice or two off a hunk of seemingly black india-rubber pulled down from inside the chimney, which represented a mutton ham; but that was all, and what the people lived on it was difficult to say. Their beds, or rather piles of mattresses, were comfortable enough, but unfortunately thickly inhabited, and we slept but little. At one place we came upon some men at rifle practice, and joined them in shooting at some bottles at 100 yards. My first shot with my (butted) Mauser pistol, to my extreme astonish-



ment, smashed a bottle, so I carefully shot no more ; and having presented a five-shilling piece, with St George on it—the Montenegrin patron saint—as a prize for the best shot we became very popular, and went on our way followed by the good wishes of all the shooters.

Throughout our journey we found the Montenegrins extremely polite—and honest, as one would perhaps expect to find from their history. For the story is that, after the terrible defeat of the Serbs by the Turks at the battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389 (in memory of which all Montenegrins still wear a black cap-band), the Osmanli offered fair terms to their conquered enemies. But though the lower-class Serbs accepted the terms and became the vassals of their conquerors, many of the upper classes refused them and fled to the west, preferring to join their kinsmen in the Zeta and carve out for themselves a free and independent principality in the barren and inhospitable rocks of the Crnagora. But fighters they have always been, and of their country they could always boast that, of all the Balkan States, it was the only one that had never bowed the neck to the Moslem invader. Troubles, however, were still rife ; and whether it was on the Bosnian, Herzegovinian, Albanian, or Turkish border towards Novi-Pazar, the Montenegrin shepherd still guarded his flocks rifle in hand, his scarlet waistband crammed with knives and revolvers. Even the long-haired priests—tough sturdy mountaineers much venerated by the villagers—fingered a revolver at their belts whilst attending to the spiritual needs of their congregation.

Legends of the size of the mountain trout of Montenegro had, of course, induced us to bring our rods ; and on one occasion, on emerging from the rocky forest, we found ourselves close to the Piva Monastery, with the rippling Piva river, most trouty-looking, at our feet. But before putting our rods

together, we went to have a look at the ancient church, which presented great attractions from the outside. The inside was almost pitch dark; but there were some faint frescoes to be seen, with Byzantine silver work, embroideries and missals, and the carving, as far as one could see it, looked quaint and good. So we got out our Kodaks, and, knowing but little of the photographic art, opened them out on the lectern for a time-exposure of, we thought, about fifteen minutes. But our fishing, strangely unproductive by the way, lasted two and a half hours, and we forgot all about our Kodaks. Then, with a jump, we remembered, and made a bee-line for the church. As we entered, a young monk appeared holding our still open cameras, and asking by signs whether they belonged to us. Rapidly but politely we snatched them from him and snapped the shutters down, thinking the plates were absolutely ruined. But they were not, and when developed we found a wonderful picture of the richly-fretted interior, with details of paintings and carvings which were entirely invisible to the normal eye in the obscurity of the church.

About Podgóritsa we tried again for trout. We had seen a stuffed 56-pounder in the museum at Mostar, and the inhabitants confirmed the story of giant trout in the rivers in the lower stretches of the country, so we were determined to capture some if possible. But it was not to be. On one occasion I certainly saw the back of a huge fish rise out of a mill-pool for an instant; but, equally certainly, he was not rising at my bait—which varied from the harmless fly through a spinner and a spoon down to a bit of stinking meat—according to the instructions of local sportsmen. We spent several hours in that place and others, but with no luck except an occasional small trout or other fish. Later on, when we got to Cétinje, Prince Danilo told us all about it. “Oh yes—it’s great sport; I’ve often

caught great big ones." "With a fly?" "Oh no—much more sporting than that." "With a minnow?" "No—nor with a worm or a lump of meat; much more sporting than that. What did I catch them with? Why—dynamite: quite simple. You just light your fuze-stick and chuck it in; and there's quite a sporting chance of getting your hand blown off if you don't time it properly."

The biggest fish—a white-fleshed species—apparently live where the Lake of Scutari empties into a river at the west end; and native fishermen take them with nets, for they refuse every bait. But that they exist there is no manner of doubt; for I have seen, and helped to eat, a 33-pounder.

Before going on to the capital we made a slight excursion by steamer to Scutari, and there we spent a couple of nights enjoying the quaint and prettily situated little town and its bazaars and picturesquely dressed inhabitants—Turks, Gypsies, Tosks and Greeks, whilst the attractive habit of planting trees in every courtyard and garden gave it almost the appearance of a village built in a wood. (Later on, in 1912, the Montenegrins were to make desperate efforts to take it from their hereditary enemies, and, after a terrible time in the hills, they succeeded; but, much to their chagrin, the Great Powers insisted on their giving it up again almost as soon as captured.)

At Cétinje the British Minister and his wife—Mr and Mrs Robert Kennedy<sup>1</sup>—very kindly put us up, for the hotel was hardly an attractive one. Harry had not improved the state of his inside by fishing up to his middle in icy cold mountain water, and he had unfortunately to retire to bed; but before that happened we were both presented to the ruler of the country—Prince Nicholas as he was in those days. The prince, a big heavy man in national Montenegrin dress, with side-whiskers and moustache, gave one the impression of great energy on

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir R. and Lady Kennedy.

behalf of his people, and he talked much (in rather guttural French) of the poverty of Montenegro, of the antagonism of Austria and Turkey, of his struggles to train an army and to bring some money into the country, and in general to raise it to the rank of a civilised nation. He was an ambitious creature, unscrupulous, clever, a *poseur* and quite capable of fishing in the troubled Balkan waters for his own benefit and that of his family. He had married his daughters well, one to the King of Italy and another to the future King Peter of Serbia, while a third one had espoused Francis Joseph of Battenberg; and his ambition even then was to combine Serbia and Montenegro into one State and rule over them both with the connivance and assistance of Russia, whom he looked upon and appealed to as his only friend. Russia, for her own ends, certainly supplied him with many thousand rifles and a number of compliments and high decorations; but she had no intention of getting mixed up with her protégé's quarrels with Austria, so her attitude was not always as warm as Nicholas expected, and hence many of his grievances.

But he was eminently hospitable, and took me out twice for a field-day with the Montenegrin Army. This consisted of about a battalion and a half, for he could only afford to train a small portion at a time; but they made up in mobility for the smallness of their numbers and, though the leading did not strike me as being particularly intelligent, they swarmed up the steep mountain-sides with the activity of cats. Tough and athletic, the Montenegrins gave one the impression of immense earnestness in whatever they did—for one hardly ever saw a smile or a light-hearted look: a nation of warriors if ever there was one—and well they acted up to their traditions in the fighting of after years. One wishes one could say the same of the monarch who ruled them; but although the history of King

Nicholas' doings during the Great War is obscure in many details, there seems but little doubt that, in spite of his patriotic speeches, he was intriguing with the (Austrian) enemy, and that he behaved in a treacherous manner not only to the Allies but to his own gallant people. The result was catastrophic both for Montenegro and for himself—and at that we may leave it.

To return, however, to 1899 and a glimpse of the Royal Family. The Princess, Milena, *née* Vukotić (one of the leading families), was an extremely handsome woman, with dignified and pleasant manners, though not very well conversant with any language beyond her own; whilst her unmarried daughter, Princess Xenia, later rather unenviably distinguished as her father's helpmeet, was the possessor of a pair of flashing dark eyes and a most intelligent cast of countenance. The hereditary Prince, Danilo, was hardly typical of his countrymen, and with his sentiments, his carefully tended hair and his waxed moustache seemed more adapted to a life on the Parisian boulevards than likely to become the ruler of these wild mountaineers. Princes Mirko and Peter, his younger brothers, were not yet out of their teens; but I liked their looks much better than those of Danilo, and, in a few games of lawn-tennis with them and their Swiss tutor, I found them cheery and active boys.

Our fortnight at Cétinje came too quickly to an end; and directly Harry Cust was well enough we bade our kind hosts adieu and made for the coast at Cattaro. The carriage-road wound through flattish and uninteresting country for many miles; and suddenly, without a second's warning, we burst on one of the most magnificent views in the world—that of Cattaro and its bay as seen from the top of the zig-zag road that clings to the rocky sides of Mount Lovćen. The descent down this wonderfully-engineered road revealed ever-fresh beauties

to our sight, and even the little town and port of Cattaro were most attractive. Here we embarked on a small steamer which took us across the Adriatic to Bari, and there we parted, Harry to go to Naples and Capri, whilst, my leave being up, I had perforce to return to my duties at home.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## SOME RANDOM INTELLIGENCE RECOLLECTIONS.

As I try to recall the faces and names of those with whom I served at varying times in the Intelligence Department, Intelligence Division, Directorate of Military Intelligence, or Directorate of Military Operations—as the same department has been named at various periods of its career—a number of them start into vivid life, whilst others seem to fade away into a featureless distance. Of the former, Brackenbury is there, with his pasty-yellow, black-moustached face and almost uncanny power of getting at the root of a complicated matter in a word or a question or two. Ardagh, silent, monocled, skinny-necked (he always reminded me of a marabou stork, I fear), the writer of beautifully expressed far-seeing memoranda on the most abstruse questions, was always something of a mystery to us. He never spoke, and when he sent for us to give him information on certain subjects, there was dead silence on his part whilst we talked. I once gave him a full account of Morocco matters during the space of something like half an hour. He leant back in his chair, never interrupted once nor took a note, and at the end he slowly screwed his eyeglass in and said in a hollow, faded voice, “Thank you.” Yet he had absorbed painlessly all that I had told him, and the issue was a masterpiece of writing. Over his head was a placard

in large letters, which the interviewer could not possibly fail to see:—

When you come to see a man on	} BUSINESS.
Confine yourself to stating your	
Be lucid and brief about your	
And leave him to his	

In after life I often wished I had laid in half a dozen of these placards for my own use.

Ardagh was in charge of the I.D. during the whole of the South African War, and, largely owing to his capable management of it, the Department was one of the few which came out of the subsequent investigation by the Royal Commission on the War with flying colours.

Another D.M.I. was General E. F. Chapman. He had done excellent work, I believe, as Q.M.G. to Lord Roberts in Afghanistan and India, but had unfortunately developed an advanced form of some disease which precluded his continuing to serve in hot climates. We were all very fond of him personally; but why he had been pitchforked by Lord Roberts into the very difficult position of D.M.I. at home—to deal with foreign political and other European matters of which he was necessarily entirely ignorant—we none of us could ever make out.

Charles à Court<sup>1</sup> and Henry Wilson were together in charge of the 'French' Section when I rejoined the I.D. in 1894. They were both Rifle Brigade men, and both extremely able in different ways; and both subsequently made a considerable mark in the world—again in different ways. Henry Wilson, with whom I made great friends at that time, had a curious and attractive vein of humour in him. It was unlike anyone else's, and came out in unex-

<sup>1</sup> Later Lieut.-Colonel à C. Repington, C.M.G., of 'Times' Military Correspondent fame.



pected forms, difficult to define, difficult to give instances; but, like the rest of him, original in the highest degree. His mind always struck me as being on a different plane from that of other people: not necessarily higher or lower, but oblique, cutting into accepted or other ideas at an angle and shedding a new or different light on them. He was a 'clear thinker' in the highest degree. I did not always agree with him, and in several important instances, both before and during the Great War (as it turned out), he was certainly quite wrong. But his methods of reasoning, as he explained a matter to one, seemed masterpieces of lucidity and appeared most conclusive; and they were generally convincing. His death at the hands of murderous Irishmen was a heavy loss not only to Ulster but to the Empire.

Dear old 'Fairy' (Major, subsequently Colonel, W. E. Fairholme, C.M.G.) and I ran the 'Austro-Turkish' Section together from 1894 to 1897 (I took charge of it 1897-99). Of partly German birth (his mother was German), he was extremely thorough and efficient, and I learnt much under him. I had known him at the Staff College in 1890, where he, amongst other things, was a most capable Mess President.<sup>1</sup> He always had a *flair* for the good things of this world; and when in the I.D. he was always getting up dinners to people of interest in our line.

Our section included all Africa that was not European colonies; and indeed a great portion of our work was connected with that continent—especially with Egypt, the Sudan, Abyssinia, the Congo and the Upper Nile. Those were the days of Congo expansion and of most complicated goings-on on the Upper Nile, of which the public heard little or nothing; and many were the men of different nationalities who made their names there, or who, striving in the wilds against the forces of nature

<sup>1</sup> But he *would* wear black riding-breeches when he was in mourning.

and of savage enemies, fought, and in many cases fell, in the service of their respective countries. One dinner in 1895 was especially memorable; for it included Slatin, who had just escaped from the clutches of the Khalifa; Wingate, his rescuer; Lugard, who had done great things on the Upper Nile and subsequently went to Nigeria; Baron Dhanis, the dare-devil Belgian leader of the Congolese forces; Colville, who had, as Governor of Uganda, fought and smitten King Kabarega hip and thigh; Thruston, one of his adventurous lieutenants, a most charming captain in the Oxford Light Infantry, later killed in the Sudanese mutiny; Macdonald, R.E., later Governor of Uganda (afterwards commanding troops in the Lhasa expedition); and, I think, Roddy Owen, who was also at home on the Upper Nile. We made up the dozen with an extra I.D. and Foreign Office man, whose names escape me; and we had a glorious African evening of the most intense interest.

About this time the King of the Belgians came over to London, and the Prince of Wales kindly invited me to meet him at dinner at the Marlborough Club. His Majesty was not particularly *bien vu* in the Foreign Office and Intelligence circles at the time, so that in a long conversation on Congo affairs which I had with him I was well on my guard. The King tried to pick my brains as to what was happening on the Upper Nile, and whilst pretending the greatest friendliness and complaining of cruel misrepresentations of his benevolent intentions, asked me several most searching questions of a political tendency. I happened to be well primed with the whole subject—it was, after all, my business to be so—and did not like his somewhat shifty eyes and the nervous way in which he kept clasping and unclasping his hands behind his back. So I told him all that was good for him to hear, fenced with his other questions and finally told him an intentional

terminological 'inexactitude.' I forget exactly what it was about, but he swallowed it whole, and I think it had certain small favourable consequences. Anyhow I reported in writing the whole conversation to the D.M.I., and he passed it on to the Foreign Office with, I believe, useful results.

Those were the days of the 'scramble for Africa'—French, British, Germans, Italians and Belgians all trying to outdo each other in the race. The Khalifa still held the mass of the Sudan, and many were the attempts to get into it from the south *via* British East Africa ('Kenya' was not then invented), Uganda, the Congo and even Wadai; whilst the French were trying to extend and consolidate that huge area of 'light agricultural soil' about which Lord Salisbury was so sarcastic. It eventually came to a head in the Treaty of the 21st March 1899, about which we of Section D. had much to say; for the Foreign Office were perpetually referring to us for information and suggestions as to how the line should be drawn which should effectively bound the respective interests of France on the west and Britain on the east. We went into the matter in great detail, and eventually drew up a draft map in which the proposed boundary should run according to the best and most modern ideas concerning watersheds, lie of the land and political and native interests. Several times we had to modify it according to Foreign Office exigencies, and at last we had it, as we thought, perfect, and sent it in, approved by the Foreign Office, to be agreed on between the two Foreign Offices.

The Treaty and map came out a month or two later; but judge of our disgust when we found that the boundary was not at all what we had proposed. It turned out, as I discovered much later, that Lord Salisbury and M. Cambon had got together and, rather bored with the whole question, had disregarded (and I believe not even read) the

Foreign Office and our own memoranda and maps on the subject. They had put their heads together over an old-fashioned and out-of-date atlas and there and then drawn a line which they thought would do, described it in diplomatic language and signed it practically forthwith. And when we came to read the description and compared it with their boundary-line we were entirely nonplussed, for (as everyone can see) the description did not fit the line. At one place indeed the line is described as running along a certain parallel and then as running due south-east until it meets the inter-section of a certain parallel and a certain meridian; but it never does, and cannot, meet this inter-section, for that is in quite another direction. However, the Treaty was signed and published, and there was an end of it. We prophesied hideous complications over it, but in the distant future (for at that time the country in question had not been explored); and in 1925 our prophecies came true.

The quaint thing about it was that Lord Salisbury and M. Cambon had been dividing up Africa as if nobody but Britain and France was concerned in it; and they were much surprised at receiving a strong protest from the Italians, who had expected to be consulted in the matter. Italy had been much annoyed with the annexation of Tunisia by France in 1881, and had always maintained—though perhaps not officially—a prescriptive right to the hinterland of Tunisia and Tripoli; and now it had all been divided up between Great Britain and France. A general election was coming on in Italy, and the Prime Minister begged for (at all events) a slice of territory somewhere in the blank space of the map—it did not matter much where, as long as he could colour it green and call it Italian—to please his party. But even this pleasure was mercilessly denied him. However, it all came right in the end: the Italo-Turkish war of 1911 saw to that.

Many years afterwards I met M. Cambon (whom already I knew well) at a dinner-party, and, the talk turning on Africa, I described to him in would-be humorous terms the very odd boundaries and descriptions in the Treaty of 1899. M. Cambon listened, with a smile that grew broader as I went on, and when I stopped he merely said, "C'est moi qui l'ai fait." Tableau. And then he told me the true story of it.

But I am going ahead too fast.

The inception of the Sudan campaign was another matter of interest. It will be remembered that the Italians were, on 1st March 1896, very badly beaten by the Abyssinians at the battle of Adua. What happened was this: in the winter of 1895-96 General Baratieri had a force of 20,000 Italians practically eating their heads off at Massawa, whilst the Italian Premier, Crispi, was perpetually stirring him up, and was much annoyed, for political reasons, because he did not move out and attack the Abyssinians who were mustering in the hills to the south. Baratieri, poor man, was quite right; for he had insufficient equipment and transport to enable him to undertake a very serious campaign, far from his base, in those waterless hills, and Crispi would not send him any more stuff.

During this time Crispi, who had himself initiated the campaign, was being vehemently attacked in Parliament and elsewhere, and saw clearly that unless he could announce a brilliant victory in Abyssinia which would justify the expense incurred, his political fall was certain. Hence he refused to send out more stuff, telegraphed to Baratieri: "Your campaign is a military phthisis" (whatever that may mean—I presume a wasting away), and meanwhile, without telling Baratieri, sent out General Baldissera to supersede him. A kind friend, however, wired the true state of affairs to Baratieri, and the latter, in despera-

tion, started out to fight before Baldissera could arrive.

The result was disaster, largely brought about by a slip in Staff work. The four brigades received their orders based on the Headquarters Staff map, which was on a larger scale than the maps with the troops. General Arimondi's brigade was told to march to Kidane Maret, the Staff meaning to keep him in line with the other brigades. Now Kidane Maret was not marked on Arimondi's map, whilst Enda Kidane Maret, some six miles farther on, was. Not unnaturally he marched to Enda Kidane Maret, and found himself next morning 'in the air' and attacked by swarms of Abyssinians. His brigade, encircled by ever-increasing masses of the enemy, was cut to ribbons, and the other three brigades, coming up piecemeal over hideously difficult country to his assistance, though fighting gallantly, shared his fate. There were some 90,000 Abyssinians in the field. As it turned out, they were so short of food and water that orders were on the point of being issued for a withdrawal and dispersal,<sup>1</sup> when it was reported that a small body of Italians was at Enda Kidane Maret, and the attack was ordered.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Leontiev, who was with the Abyssinian army at the time, told me this when we met at Addis Ababa.

<sup>2</sup> Another instance of the great importance of careful map-work will be recalled by the student of the Waterloo campaign. After the battle of Ligny, Gneisenau, Blücher's chief of the staff—Blücher himself having been knocked senseless by some stampeding horses—instructed the Prussian army to fall back towards a certain village some miles on the other (German) side of Wavre, with a view to retiring towards Germany. The village was not marked on regimental maps; so Gneisenau told them to fall back on Wavre, which they did. During the night Blücher recovered his senses, and at once issued orders to move from Wavre, not towards Germany but towards Wellington. Had Gneisenau's original order been carried out, the army would have been on the wrong road; and it would have been an extremely difficult (if not impossible) matter to bring the troops right again so as to deal in time the successful Prussian blow at Napoleon's right flank, which as we all know practically gave the Allies the victory at Waterloo. On such small things hang great ones.

Baratieri certainly had bad luck, but he did not improve his reputation by his subsequent actions.

This disaster was, in addition, a serious matter for the Italians holding Kassala and Agordat against the Dervishes, for it left them, in their turn, 'in the air.' The Italian Government therefore applied to Great Britain, saying that they would be obliged to give up Kassala unless we came to their aid by attacking the Dervishes in flank.

Lord Lansdowne was then War Minister, and as I was in charge of the section (Fairholme being away in Egypt) I was sent to explain to him the positions on the map. I found that, although we had sent him one of the latest issue some time before, he had not seen it, and his own map was shockingly out of date—another proof that the I.D. was not sufficiently appreciated by the Secretary of State's entourage. So I gave him a new one, marking the positions with flags. His Lordship was rather amused at my contempt of his old map, and asked me what I thought would be the best thing to do to help the Italians. I said at once that I did not think it was necessary to have a serious campaign against the Dervishes, but that a "twopenny-halfpenny sort of demonstration" would probably have the effect of withdrawing the Dervishes from Kassala. This I said, not only being entirely of that opinion myself, but also knowing that Kitchener did not want a big advance to be made yet awhile, for the full strength of the Egyptian Army reserves had been calculated for a date about two years later.

Lord Lansdowne thanked me for my remarks, and I returned to the I.D. thinking that in any case the Government, which had plenty of other things to worry it just then, would not take any very serious action. But I was quite wrong. A few days afterwards, just as we were leaving the office, came a note from the S.S.W. (or Foreign Office, I forget which) enclosing a message purporting to come from

the 'Times' correspondent at Cairo, but dated 2 a.m. on the following day, to the effect that it had been decided to despatch an expedition at once up the Nile with the object of driving back the Khalifa. And with the note came an intimation that the news need not be kept secret.

We were naturally in a state of jubilation, and I rushed off to the Guards Club and spread the news abroad. But the Brigade 'Point-to-point' was going to take place on the morrow, and my news aroused but little of the interest that I expected.

The wire conveying the Government's intention reached the Sirdar, Sir Herbert Kitchener as he then was, at about 5 A.M., and he tumbled out of bed and went to consult Lord Cromer. Together for some hours they worked out matters—finance, reserves, supplies, contracts, steamers, &c.—and Kitchener went off at about 9 A.M. to issue his orders. Suddenly 'the Lord' jumped as if he had been shot: "Good God, we haven't told the Khedive!" and off he rushed in his carriage to the palace. By the mercy of Providence the Khedive was a late riser and had not yet heard the news—so all was well. But the incident sheds a curious light on the paradoxical situation, as always, in Egypt: that a British Government could decide to employ the Egyptian Army on an expedition which might last for years—and its subordinates could issue orders to this effect—without even asking the Khedive whether he objected or consented to such a use being made of his Army.

Another curious incident, rather to the same effect, was that the General commanding *British* troops in Egypt was sent orders from home (I never could find out who was really responsible for this awful *gaffe*—I need hardly say it had not come through the I.D.) as to the primary moves of the expeditionary force—i.e., of the *Egyptian* Army—as if the G.O.C. were Sirdar and were going to take command. The



G.O.C. (one General Knowles) was naturally much bewildered at these orders, which came pouring in for twenty-four hours or more, and he luckily consulted Kitchener, who was meanwhile, of course, issuing orders 'on his own.' Kitchener, always very distrustful and suspicious of the home authorities, was much alarmed, and tore off to see 'the Lord,' who put matters right in one caustic cable home. The resulting wire from home to the G.O.C. was a masterpiece of ingenious wording, as if the real facts regarding the command had been recognised all along; but they had 'given themselves away' badly.

Even in the best-regulated Headquarters Staff—and, frankly, ours was not of the very best before the Boer War—it is difficult to know who is to be held responsible for certain things and for issuing certain orders. One need only refer to the appalling muddle in the German Ober-Kommando at the beginning of the Great War (September 1914) as an instance. But a certain small matter within my cognisance will perhaps illustrate the point. In 1908, I think it was, things round Tangier were getting rather serious. The tribes were 'up,' and were approaching the town; and the Europeans there were becoming decidedly nervous. We of the D.M.O. reported these things as a matter of course to the Chief of the General Staff, but nothing was done. Our Minister out there reported to the Foreign Office, but nothing was done. We had troops, of course, close by at Gib., but the Governor-General there gave no sign, waiting, I suppose, for orders from home. At last, when things were beginning to look as if they might become really dangerous, I took it on myself to press the D.M.O. to urge the C.I.G.S. to take action 'on his own'; and a certain amount was consequently done in the way of fortifying and arming the Legation from Gib. The danger passed away; but supposing there

had been a catastrophe, I have often wondered who would have been held responsible—the Foreign Office, the Governor of Gib. or the General Staff. It was not really a Staff matter at all in the first instance; yet I am sure everybody would have cast the blame, as usual, on the unfortunate War Office.

It is always unfair to blame a public department unless one has the pros and cons at one's finger-ends; for although they may have an excellent answer to the accusation, the unfortunate officials are debarred from publicly replying. And if an accusation is made in any range of life and no answer is forthcoming, one is naturally inclined to condemn the accusee. I remember one trifling instance which would be hardly worth recording were it not typical. It was after the yearly Staff College entrance examination had been held, and there was apparently gross delay in publishing the names of the successful candidates. Fuming letters were written to the 'Times' by the fathers of anxious examinees, and the matter was taken up by several other authorities and newspapers. The examination had taken place in July, yet here was September approaching and still no results: it was scandalous, disgraceful, just like the incompetent War Office, &c. The Assistant Director of Military Education, who was getting somewhat alarmed at the virulence of the attacks, yet could say nothing, happened to confide to me the reason. It was simply that one of the candidates was quartered in Esquimaux and another in Hong-kong. The papers had, of course, to be sent out there, the candidates examined for a week or more, and their answers returned and marked before the final result could be published.

And this I may say, without divulging office secrets, that in nine cases out of ten, when the soldiers are blamed for not doing so-and-so, or for some urgent reform or other not being carried out, the reason is

a financial one. Everything in the Army costs money, which most people forget; the Treasury keeps a frightfully tight hold on every sixpence; it is convinced that every soldier is a spendthrift by nature—which is the exact opposite of the truth, at all events when they have the spending of public money—and it insists on examining every detail and deciding, even in purely military subjects, whether a certain expenditure is necessary or not. According to its law of the Medes and Persians, money which is allotted under one particular vote must be spent on that vote and on no other; so that although there may be a large surplus under one vote and a crying deficit under another, no money may pass between them, and the surplus has to be returned to the Treasury. Nor may you carry on money from year to year. Say that for one particular department or section the annual money granted is £1000, and you spend only £700 of it, and know that you *must* spend £1200 on something very important the next year, you *must* return the £300 and go short of £200 next year. And you know that if you spend only £700 one year the Treasury is practically certain only to allow you £700 the following year, for such is their way. So in order to get £1000 the next year you are practically obliged to spend the unwanted £300 this year on something you do not really want. This was perpetually happening to us on the General Staff, and, to give an extreme instance, I might mention the case of a certain architect engaged on a public building, who estimated his expenditure at £600 and was given it. Owing to unforeseen circumstances he found he could do it for £440, and did it, and returned the £160. Much to his surprise the financial people said no: £600 had been voted and £600 he *must* spend; and when he told them that he could not spend it and what was he to do with it? they said that was not their affair; so with much misgiving he put it in his

pocket. This sort of thing is apparently the Treasury's idea of Public Economy. Yet they will not entrust a soldier in a responsible position with a lump sum and allow him to spend it economically and to the best advantage of the Service, but insist on investigating and questioning and cutting down every detail, employing armies of clerks for the business. I can assure them, and the public, that if they would only trust the soldier, making the recipient personally responsible for the money and for the efficiency of his service as certified by his superior officer, they would save huge sums of money, both directly and indirectly.

I remember also the case of Sir Baker Russell when he was commanding at Portsmouth. He had occasion once to claim a pound or two's travelling expenses incurred on a matter of duty; and the Treasury clerk at the War Office refused to allow it as not having been certified by independent authority. Sir Baker was naturally quite furious about it, sent his A.D.C. into the streets of Portsmouth and collected a blind beggar, a crossing-sweeper and a lady street-walker. These were duly brought to the office and signed their names and professions to the application, which was forwarded to the War Office with a savage and devastating official minute. The claim was paid.

I sincerely trust that by this time the Treasury may have seen the error of its ways and amended them. But I doubt it.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE BOER WAR. 1899.

EVER since the days of the Jameson Raid in 1896 relations had been becoming more and more strained between President Kruger and ourselves. Attracted, naturally, by the discoveries of gold and diamonds in South Africa, more and more Englishmen had settled in the Transvaal, and more and more power was finding its way into their hands. Equally naturally the Boers did not like this. They brought in measures to curtail English activities, and went so far as to impose disabilities upon them in the way of elections and education. Protests were of no avail. Neither side would give way; and the break-up of the Conference between Lord Milner and Krüger at Pretoria could only have one ending—war. This was declared in October 1899.

It is worth recalling Cecil Rhodes' view of the probable duration of hostilities. His prophecy was that the war would last not more than three months, and that directly we got to Pretoria the Boer Republics would collapse. As a matter of fact it took us eight months to reach Pretoria and a further two years to finish the war.

As far as I was concerned, I had rejoined my 2nd Battalion at the end of my service in the I.D. in July 1899. Much to everyone's surprise the old tradition that Guards battalions would not be called upon to serve in colonial wars was broken, and to

our general delight three battalions were put under orders for South Africa. The 3rd Battalion Grenadiers were at that moment garrisoning Gibraltar—another break with tradition—so were selected to represent the regiment; and by a great bit of luck it fell to me (I had got my majority a short time previously) to join them as their junior major. I accordingly sailed from Southampton with a draft of some 300 men to raise the 3rd Battalion to war strength, and the battalion, under Colonel Crabbe,<sup>1</sup> with David Kinloch as second in command, reached Cape Town in the good ship *Goorkha* early in November.

The prevalent idea had, in common with Cecil Rhodes, been that the war would be over in a few months; and we were quite prepared, on arriving at the Cape, to find that our services would not be required. (I remember indeed our adjutant, F. L. Fryer, laying even money that it would be so. Poor fellow, he was one of the first of the battalion to be killed out there.) But we were quickly undeceived; for the news was that Sir George White's force in Natal had been driven back and was shut up in Ladysmith, whilst our orders were to proceed up-country at once to form part of a force under Lord Methuen attacking northwards so as to relieve the pressure in the east.

We therefore went up by train to De Aar, on the Orange River, and spent a few days getting into condition whilst the rest of the brigade arrived (2nd Coldstream under Colonel Horace Stopford and 1st Scots Guards under Colonel Arthur Paget). Then, hearing that a strong force of Brother Boer was somewhere on our right flank, we proceeded in an easterly direction and located him in the neighbourhood of the kopjes above Belmont Farm.

A rough reconnaissance was made by Willoughby Verner, our Intelligence officer, and orders based on

<sup>1</sup> My old friend of Camel Corps days.

it quickly followed. Of course in those days the country had never been properly surveyed.<sup>1</sup> Consequently there were no maps. Consequently an attack over entirely unknown ground was rather a happy-go-lucky affair, not to be compared with attacks in the Great War, where every detail was already marked on the Ordnance maps of the country, supplemented by air reconnaissance. Verner, a major in the Rifle Brigade (who had been with the Camel Corps in 1884-85), was a great topographic expert, had invented some most useful instruments and was altogether a great authority on reconnaissance. Besides all this he was a plucky fellow, and pushed forward on this occasion to within rifle-shot of the enemy. Yet the sketch that he produced and on which the orders were based was hopelessly unlike the real thing (I speak with some knowledge, for after the action I was told off with him to make a rapid survey of the ground for historical purposes). My only object in thus digressing is to confirm my point (made in a previous chapter—*v.* p. 111) that even in those days it was really waste of time to spend many weeks in trying to teach officers—as we were taught at the Staff College—to make elaborate sketches and rapid surveys of ground for purposes of military action. Nay, more—it was dangerous to do so, for such sketches were likely to be very misleading—as we found in this instance. (The same thing occurred in the Russo-Turkish War, when orders based on reconnaissance sketches round Plevna led to heavy losses in the Russian Army.) In short, though the principles of sketching should be taught, it should be recognised that no reliance can be placed on sketches made at a distance. In this case the ground, as well as the situation of the enemy, was quite different from what we had been led to expect and caused dangerous gaps in our attack in some places and dangerous crowding in others.

<sup>1</sup> *V.* p. 144.

The two brigades (Guards under Colvile and 9th under Pole-Carew of the Coldstream) moved out from Belmont Farm by night on a broad front, with Ruggles-Brise (of our battalion) as guiding officer. Elaborate orders had been given out, but oblique and unknown wire-fences played the devil with our direction, and, with strict silence enjoined, it was difficult to keep touch in the dark. The enemy, however, helped us, for just as dawn was breaking he became aware of the attack, and after a few single rifle-shots from the near kopje, a spattering fire broke out from the heights, the flashes giving us an excellent line to march on. The fire became heavier, and more and more bullets came whizzing into our ranks, till it became a regular fusillade. But we did not stop to answer, and pressed on all the faster to the foot of the kopjes. Then up them with fixed bayonets, and jolly hard work it was, scrambling up those rocks in the dark, for officers as well as men carried rifles and ammunition, and it was borne in on me for the first time how frightfully heavy our thick white leather equipment really was. I got to the top of the first range with the rush of my men and bowled over a Boer—a dark figure against the eastern sky—at about ten yards range as he was legging it away. A moment later somebody fired from nearly between my legs, and I found I was nearly on top of a Boer lying down in a stone ‘sangar,’ who had not noticed me, but was firing steadily down-hill at our advancing troops. No time to lose, and he rapidly paid the penalty of his patriotism. War is a horrible thing, and I remember well looking at his body with a feeling of sympathy for him and regret that such things had to be; but one has to act in a hurry on such occasions, and it was not till two years afterwards that it struck me that instead of doing what I had done I ought to have made him a prisoner. But I am still in some doubt, for on that same day, a little



later, one of my subalterns, poor Blundell, was shot through the body by a wounded Boer to whom he was offering a drink of water, and he died next day.

But the battle was not yet over by any means, for in front of us was another totally unexpected ridge—not marked in Verner's map—and it was held by another lot of Boers. It was broad daylight by this time, and we collected our scattered forces as best we could and attacked again. This time it was not so strenuous, for the enemy bolted as soon as we got a footing there. But the confusion was terrible, for by the time we got to the top I had lost my company altogether and found myself amongst a crowd of Coldstream who I had thought were at least half a mile off on our left !

Gradually we got sorted out and, the enemy having disappeared, we returned several weary miles to camp and got a good meal. The next morning was spent in collecting and burying bodies, and, as far as I was concerned, in making a sketch of the ground. But that the confusion had been equally great on the Boer side was proved by a remark subsequently made to me by a German farmer in Bloemfontein. In discussing the action at Belmont he said that the Boers had had hardly any losses at all there—in fact, that only two had been killed ; and he was much impressed by my telling him—the absolute truth—that I had personally helped in burying forty-one !

Then northwards and, two days afterwards, the battle of Graspan (it seems absurd now, after the terrific battles of the Great War, to give that name to these tiny little actions, but so it was). My battalion was not engaged in the actual assault, but previous to it we extended at four paces interval and advanced across the bush-veld. It was just like a line of beaters at a big shoot—"Hare right !" "Pauw left !" "Springbok in front !" "Kurhaan over !" There was a terrific amount of game afoot,

and had we only had scatter-guns we should have bagged a lot of stuff. The game for us began when a solitary Boer gun started shooting at us; but its range was short, though we helped it by moving towards it, and its shells only exploded on impact and did no damage. Then our force formed for attack, with ourselves in reserve, and before long the Boers had been hustled out of their position. But the loss to the little Naval Brigade attached to us was grievous, for, naturally not knowing anything about attack-formation, they had gallantly advanced shoulder to shoulder and had been shot down in dozens by the Boer marksmen.

Some prisoners had been taken, too, and among them was a tall good-looking dark fellow with a sombre scowl of hatred on his face, a Field-cornet, if I remember right, of the name of Van Rissik. I mention him here only as an instance of the whirling of time, for during the Great War my wife happened to nurse his wounded son, a member of the South African contingent, in hospital! Another one was a Jew mining millionaire of the name of Jeppe, in a smart tweed suit and leggings and a brand new revolver-case, who, wishing to be on the right side, had smilingly given himself up on purpose. He had the impertinence to try and make friends with us, and said confidently that of course, being who he was, he would now be allowed to make his way comfortably to Cape Town, as he did not want to be mixed up with any beastly hostilities. His face was a picture when we told him to go to the devil, and imparted to him the cruel information that he would be treated like every other prisoner and kept in confinement till the end of the war. "But I'm Jeppe," he bleated, as the escort drove him back to the other prisoners, and his wailing was still borne to us on the wind as he and his fellow-captives were formed up and marched off southwards.

Then forward again towards the Modder River,

with a moonless night on outposts, the sentries, I remember, being most difficult to find in the thick brushwood during our nightly rounds; and no sooner had one got to the end of the line than one had to begin again. There was little or no sleep for any of the officers that night, and hard walking all the time.

The Boers were reported to be in strength and well entrenched on the Modder, and orders were issued for an attack in force. Major-General Sir Henry Colville (late Grenadiers and an old friend of mine) was, as mentioned above, in command of the Guards Brigade, its 4th Battalion being the 2nd Norfolks. The rest of the force under Lord Methuen consisted of four naval cow-guns (60-pdrs., drawn by oxen), the 9th Brigade (Pole-Carew), two batteries R.F.A. (with a range of only 4400 yards), Rimington's 'Tigers' (an Irregular Colonial Mounted Corps) and the 9th Lancers under Gough.

The bush had now given way to a dead level plain, flat and bare as a billiard-table; and though nothing could have been better as a parade-ground, it was hardly the sort of terrain that one would have chosen over which to attack, the whole being commanded by very slightly rising ground on the other side of the river, a bend of which lay on our right flank. The houses of the farm covering the main ford were just visible in the distance, as well as a few low trees and bits of bush lining the river banks; but that was all we had to shoot at all day, and there were no good maps to give us the accurate range.

The force extended for attack in the orthodox way, and we advanced in open order until the number of enemy bullets spattering into our ranks told us that we were within range; and then we opened fire at about 1200 yards, advancing by alternate half-companies until the heavy fire brought us to a standstill. And there we lay practically all day.

The Boers had six to one the best of us, for they could see us and we could not see them. The smokeless powder of their Mausers gave no indication where they were; and any advance of small bodies of men brought at once a shower of well-aimed bullets, which rapidly resulted in many casualties to ourselves. The Coldstream on the right tried to get round the enemy's left by crossing the river bend; but the river was much deeper than we had been led to expect, and the attempt merely resulted in a few men being nearly drowned. Our field-guns seemed to produce little effect, and our machine-guns, being on wheels, stood up well in the landscape and offered lovely targets to the enemy. The Boers had one or two field-guns under a German (Major Albrecht) in their service, but they did little execution; much more dangerous were their 'pom-poms,' a form of Hotchkiss machine-gun firing belts of five cartridges, each containing a small one-pounder shell. They were rather jumpy to watch, as each successive round of the five arrived about 20 yards nearer to us than its predecessor; and when the first shell exploded about 100 yards immediately in front of one, the question of where the last one would pitch became somewhat urgent. Meanwhile we were running short of ammunition, and its supply across the dead level ground became rather exciting for the ammunition carriers.

It was a roasting day, and the water-bottles were soon empty; and as the afternoon wore on many men went to sleep under the desultory fire of the enemy. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, too, on our left, suffered considerably from the sun, which attacked the bare skin of the back of their knees and rendered many incapable of marching on the following day. Meanwhile orders kept coming along from the flanks by word of mouth; but in addition to their often being incomprehensible by the time they reached one, it was extraordinarily

difficult to get an absolutely synchronised advance going. For directly a section or two stood up and advanced a few yards, a concentrated fire was poured in on them by the Boers, and, with several men killed, they sank down again on the ground. It was a check to us with a vengeance, and we racked our brains as to how we were to get on.

At last, as the sun was nearing the horizon, word was passed round that we were to retire a short distance on given fronts as soon as it was dark and form up for a night attack with the bayonet. I sat up to take a compass-bearing on to our point, and just as I was putting an eye to the instrument I suddenly found myself on my back, with a terrific tingling of all my nerves—like a violent electric shock—and a complete inability to move my body. Not much doubt as to what had happened; and I asked feebly of David Kinloch, who I knew was close by, where I was hit. "You've got it in the neck," he answered, and he passed on the word, "Poor Glick is dead!" Luckily his remarks were only 50 per cent true. I put my finger just below my ear and withdrew it covered with blood; but no pain at all.

I have a faint remembrance of having screamed and used shocking language about the enemy; but my nerves gradually quietened down, and by the time we retired I managed to hobble back with assistance to the dressing-station where the surgeon examined me. The bullet had gone in under my right ear and come out nearly opposite but a little lower down. The doctor could see my carotid artery beating through the first hole, so it had been a near shave; and evidently the bullet must have been deflected by my mastoid and passed round behind the spine under the skin and out at the other side, the heat of its velocity having apparently cauterised the wound; for I never felt any pain *whatever*, either then or afterwards, in my neck. But as my

right arm speedily began to hurt considerably, the bullet must have damaged the spinal accessory nerve in passing, and the pain continued off and on for several weeks.

I spent that night in the Field Ambulance, and was forwarded in a cart next day to the hospital at De Aar station. Max Earle of my battalion, who was ill, was sent down with me, and told me that his brother in the Coldstream had been killed the day before, a long way behind the firing-line, by a casual bullet—an extraordinary piece of bad luck, for he was not with any troops at the time.

On arrival at De Aar that evening I was, much to my disgust, sentenced to be 'evacuated' to Cape Town. This annoyed me considerably, as I felt comparatively undamaged, and I protested that in a day or two I should be fit to rejoin my battalion. But the doctors were obstinate, labelled me 'severely wounded' and made me lie down in a hot and fly-infested bell-tent. I became rather bored with this after a time, and being very hungry and learning from the orderly that the only chance of food was perhaps a cup of beef-tea in an hour or two, I got up when his back was turned, took my way to the station restaurant and made a hearty meal off tinned lobster and bottled beer. When, after rather a nightmarish night, I confided this to the doctor next morning he nearly had a fit.

On arrival at Cape Town I was sent to Winburg Base Hospital, and there I stayed for four days. But friends were at hand in the shape of Lady Edward Cecil and Lady Charles Bentinck. To these ladies had been handed over the charming country house of Groote Schuur, Cecil Rhodes' property at Rondebosch, near Cape Town, whilst its owner and their husbands were shut up in Kimberley, and they had turned it into a convalescent hospital for officers. There I spent a very pleasant three or four weeks recuperating and enjoying the gracious

‘hospitality’ (in two senses) dispensed by these two ladies.

And here I may at once say that I was glad that the doctors had sent me down to the base. Though my muscular damage was negligible, I suffered all the same from something approaching to what is now known as shell-shock. I confess without shame—for the cause was purely physical—that I was extremely jumpy, and that the idea of going back to the front filled me at first with terror. I was in fact in a blue funk, though I hope I did not show it. As time went on my nerves quietened down, and during the last week I was anxious, nay desperately keen, to rejoin my battalion; but it took time, and meanwhile I used to go in every day to Cape Town to help in the Censor’s office under Lord Edmund Talbot<sup>1</sup> and my old friend Jos Bagot.

Whilst I was at Groote Schuur rather a comic episode occurred. Shortly before the outbreak of war Cecil Rhodes had sent a young lion to President Krüger as a peace offering; but it was promptly and indignantly returned, and it had since been living in a wooden cage in the garden at Groote Schuur. One day it leant against the side of the cage, which was of the nature of a hen-coop, and found itself at liberty. The word at once went round that a ferocious lion was loose, and the whole of Rondebosch turned out with rifles and shot-guns, whilst the feminine portion of the community hid itself indoors and put up the shutters. The whole of that day was occupied, but in vain, in the search for the terrible carnivore; and it was not till the evening that the Groote Schuur native gardener found him cowering behind a gooseberry-bush a few yards from his cage, and more than willingly he re-entered it.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord FitzAlan.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE BOER WAR. 1900.

I REJOINED my battalion just in time for the New Year of the new century. Most of the officers had grown beards and were almost unrecognisable, but few were missing, for the battalion had not been heavily engaged at Magersfontein—that battle that took toll so heavily of the Highland Brigade under General Andy Wauchope.

A week or two elapsed in outpost duties and other joys of the same nature, and then my C.O., Crabbe, suddenly received a telegram from Lord Kitchener—who had arrived with Lord Roberts a few days before—ordering me to report for duty at Cape Town. Here I received orders of a peculiarly uncongenial nature. Lord Kitchener was reorganising the transport and supply arrangements of the whole force, and I was told off to assist in dividing one company of the A.S.C. into two and then to take charge of the new company when organised. It was a job I knew nothing whatever about, especially as the company was partly mule, partly horse and partly ox, and had a most complicated establishment, bearing little resemblance to the A.S.C. companies of which I had learnt a very little eight years before, at Aldershot. However, it had to be done, and I trained off to Naauwport, where the cavalry was concentrating, and reported myself, finding that the officer commanding the company I was to dismantle



was a captain and therefore junior to myself. I wished to goodness he had been my senior, so that he could have shown me how to do the darn thing, or rather do it himself and tell me what to do in picking up the bits and sticking them together.

I need not have fashed myself. Christopherson was a first-rate and very hard-working captain and tactful besides, and he was quite capable of doing both his own work and mine. I learnt much of the detail of the work, and learnt besides to admire both the wonderful efficiency of the men and their equable temperament in times of stress that would have driven me wild with worry. After about eighteen hours of hard work the officers and men would lie down and try to snatch a bit of sleep. But no sooner had they turned over than a voice would be heard from the darkness demanding repairs for a cart or for a broken wheel, or stores or rations for somebody; and orders of every description, often upsetting previous ones, would arrive at all hours, involving arguments with heated Staff officers, new arrangements, ladling out of supplies (even on a big scale if there was any big movement on), all done by the light of lanterns and bits of paper and requisitions that had to be checked and signed and countersigned. Yet neither officers nor men lost their tempers for a moment, and they complied with any claim or repair with the greatest affability and calmness.

Meanwhile during most mornings I acted as unofficial Staff officer as well to Colonel Benson, a charming elderly retired officer, late of the 17th Lancers, who was trying to run a section of the line of communications with one untrained clerk. As his office was some ten miles down the line, and his papers had got into a terrible muddle—largely owing to the hurricanes that used periodically to blow through his tent—I generally had to spend half the day there. I believe I had no business

to do it, but he was a very nice old person and seemed rather helpless, and, as I have said, Christopher knew much more about supply and transport work than I did.

It was at Naauwport that I made the acquaintance for the first time of General French, who kindly asked me once or twice to luncheon, and of Bertie Lawrence, Chetwode and other cavalry soldiers who distinguished themselves so much afterwards. But my duties there did not last long, for one morning I received a wire ordering me to Graspan as commandant.

Away I went again, *viâ* De Aar, and took up my quarters at Graspan amid a rolling jumble of railway-wagons and troop-trains, most of which were disgorging men and supplies at this small wayside station on the veld. As the bodies of troops successively disappeared eastwards over the plain, with orders to camp three miles out, I had to supply them with forage, food and transport as best I could. It was a hard and complicated job, and had I not luckily found my old friend 'the Mariner' there—who had been dumped there, I think, to convalesce—it would have gone hard with me, for I never got more than two or three hours' sleep. Aston, however, played up magnificently, and although he was senior to me, acted as my Staff officer and food issuer combined; but it was often a near thing with the horses and carts, for we lived from hand to mouth with these and had to economise them to the bare bone.

Then one day we got a telegram saying Lord Roberts was coming up to inspect the lines of communication, and I cleaned up camp and brushed up my people as far as could be done. The train of the G.O.C.-in-C. and Staff arrived due to time and all were detrained. But they never looked at me or my camp. They got on their horses at once and galloped off east across the veld. Then did our

suspicious come true, and we grasped the enlightening fact that this movement of troops was a flanking movement to turn the powerful position of Magersfontein and force the Boers to fall back.

One rather comic episode occurred on the following day, when all the foreign Military Attachés turned up and demanded horses and transport wherewith to rejoin G.H.Q. I just managed to supply them with the last of my very poor stock, and they departed eastwards, without an escort, for I had none to give them. Four hours afterwards my signallers on a kopje reported a number of single Boers riding towards us from the east, and after a period of puzzlement the first of them arrived; it was the French Military Attaché! Shortly afterwards came the German, the Italian and several other Attachés, their horses in a lather and themselves in the last stages of exhaustion; they had fallen into an ambush of Boers at Waterval! As I heard afterwards from John Headlam, R.H.A., who happened to be accompanying them, the Spaniard was very nearly shot down because he could not gallop—he could only trot, and that very slowly. Headlam rushed at him, hauled his horse round (evidently at the risk of his own life) and *made* him gallop. But the poor Spaniard was in shocking bad condition; he had not ridden for many months, and was very, very sore, and he had vowed that sooner than gallop he would give himself up as prisoner or even let himself be shot! But Headlam had eventually managed to get him into safety at our G.H.Q. in Jacobsdaal.

Meanwhile, by good luck, a quantity of fresh fruit, ordered by the mess of a Highland battalion, had just arrived. It was quite impossible to send it after its owners—there was no transport—so I had auctioned it and bought a good deal of it myself. With this fruit I resuscitated the Military Attachés, and they were most grateful. Indeed, Major von Lüttwitz, the German Military Attaché, whom I

already knew, swore ever after that I had saved his life with the help of two melons. (On a subsequent occasion, when I was Military Attaché in Berlin, I rather wished I had not, for I paid him a surprise visit in his rooms there about some information I wanted, and whilst waiting for his arrival looked idly at his book-shelves. And there I found a copy of a secret publication of our own Intelligence Division! I tackled him about it, but, of course, he only smiled and pretended he did not know how it got there. To return to Graspan.)

Meanwhile the cavalry were on the move to relieve Kimberley, and as Graspan was now denuded of everybody except myself, the Mariner, and about twenty-five men, including some signalmen guarding the rails and the large stacks of food and forage, and we might quite well be attacked by a roving commando of Boers, I drew up a defence scheme for my tiny command and awaited the arrival of the 'Intelligence Corps' that I had been promised. I knew they were going to be Basutos—excellent scouts by nature—and had pictured to myself a number of swarthy brown men dressed in blankets and riding small ponies, all thirsting for a fight with Brother Boer. What was my surprise then to receive a small band of extremely polite natives, attired in smart straw hats and tweed knickerbocker suits, the leader of whom took off his hat, introduced himself as 'Mr Apollo' and addressed me in excellent English. I liked the looks of them very much, and distributed them to patrol and lie out at night; but I was rather sorry for them. For, by mutual consent between ourselves and the Boers, no coloured man was allowed to carry arms, though there was a tacit but unexpressed understanding that there would be no objection to using them as scouts or spies. But an unarmed scout, if discovered by a Boer, would receive but short shrift at his hands.

The occasion, however, did not arise in this case;

and a day after receiving and transmitting some most vitally important heliograms between Roberts and French—for Graspan was an important link in the chain of signalling stations—we heard, 16th February, that Kimberley had been relieved. Shortly afterwards orders arrived for me to break up the camp at Graspan and report myself as Staff officer to Colonel Richardson, chief officer of Transport and Supplies on the Lines of Communication. After pursuing him in vain to the Modder River and thence to Jacobsdaal and Klipdrift, I found him after some difficulty at Paardeberg and was at once sent back in charge of some cattle to Klipdrift. My billet, however, was not of long duration, for next day (24th February) I was appointed Intelligence officer to the newly formed 9th Division under my old friend and chief, Sir Henry Colville—a job far more to my liking.

The 9th Division consisted mainly of two infantry brigades—the 19th, under Smith-Dorrien of Sudan fame; and the Highland Brigade, under Hector Macdonald, who had distinguished himself both in India under Lord Roberts and in the Egyptian Army at the battle of Omdurman. The 19th, by the way, included a battalion of Canadians; and strange it was to hear on the veld words of command and instructions being given in French to the company that hailed from Quebec. My old pal Ewart, of Sandhurst and the Staff College, was C.S.O., and Ruggles-Brise of the Grenadiers was D.A.A.G. (a).

The position was roughly this: that Cronje with about 4000 Boers had cleared out of Magersfontein, and, pressed by our cavalry, had drifted into a bend of the Modder River just below Paardeberg (Horse Hill—pronounce 'Pérebkh'); and by the time I arrived our troops had just managed to surround him, though our sector to the east of him was extremely thin. Our attack on the 18th February



THE STAFF OF THE 9TH DIVISION.

Nugent, Cuthbertson, Browne; Raymond, Borden;  
Johnson, Ewart, Colville, Barker; Ali Makins,  
Author; George Murray



with insufficient troops had been unsuccessful, and had only resulted in heavy losses to ourselves—again owing to attacking over quite level ground. But Colville's 19th Brigade had by now pushed forward some trenches on the right bank of the river to within measurable distance of the enemy, and it seemed as though a sudden attack on this side would have considerable effect. Lord Roberts' consent to this was gained, and orders were issued by the 9th Division for an attack on the 28th with the Canadians in the post of honour. I arrived just in time to remind Colville that the 27th was the anniversary of Majuba, and to suggest that a victory on that day would be of sentimental value. Colville, always keen for attack, jumped at the idea, and obtained Lord Roberts' leave to ante-date the attack by one day.

Wishing to get some idea of the enemy's position, I went up in a balloon in the early morning of the day previous to the attack, but was not much the wiser for it. For the Boers had ensconced themselves under the high banks of the river and dug themselves in in narrow bottle-sectioned trenches among the trees and scrub, so that there was remarkably little to see. Added to this was the disadvantage that the balloon was never still enough for one to get a compass-bearing, for, being of a perfectly spherical shape, it spun round on its cable, first one way and then the other, till it almost made me feel sick. A few bullets in my direction added to the interest of the view, but they only pierced the balloon and did no practical damage.

The advanced troops were in fire-trenches about 600 yards from the Boer lines—not the big deep trenches of the Great War, but little 3 feet deep things with a skimpy parapet in front; and into these the Canadians packed themselves in the evening. The idea was that just before dawn they were to rush forward 400 yards and, assisted by our R.E.



detachment, were to dig themselves in there and subsequently assault Brother Boer with cold steel—a thing he particularly disliked. Meanwhile the Gordon Highlanders were to occupy the old trenches and rush forward at the supreme moment. Everything was carefully thought out, including long-range assisting volleys and subsequent support from other battalions; and we of the Divisional Staff, guided by myself, paddled quietly across the river at nightfall and bivouacked under a bank ledge close by the Canadian flank. The 7th Division, by the way, was also to help with volleys from its side of the river.

At 3 A.M. heavy firing broke out, and the Canadians and R.E., covered by other battalions, moved out and dug themselves in 450 yards in front under the fire of a Boer trench only 110 yards beyond them, which did extraordinarily little damage. Firing went on for some time, and wounded men began to come back;<sup>1</sup> but just when we were about to deliver our main assault numerous Boers came over to surrender, and an order arrived from Lord Roberts to cease fire. A white flag had been hoisted and Cronje had capitulated. Boers, minus their rifles, simply swarmed out of the ground, and the rest of the day, as far as I was concerned, was occupied in collecting and counting prisoners and getting them into some sort of order to be marched away. I had the counting of them, and they came to 4091 in all—*i.e.*, 1327 Orange Free Staters and 2592 Transvaalers, besides 11 women and 161 wounded. Of these latter poor devils many had been wounded for days, but there was not a single surgeon in the Boer lines to help them. And the stink and filth in their camp when I got there was something awful: dead animals by the dozen, and all the débris of a foul camp twelve days old—no wonder that most of them wanted to chuck it.

<sup>1</sup> Only 8 Canadians were killed and 36 wounded.

When it came to counting the prisoners and sorting them into their commandos I was much helped by the chief Boers themselves, who took much trouble over it and even provided (almost illegible) lists of their men. One gentle old person, with a white beard and spectacles, asked if he might ride into captivity and not walk; and on going into the question I discovered that hardly any of the Boers wore anything but the thinnest-soled boots or shoes: 'Jemima' boots with elastic sides were the main footwear. For, of course, if a man practically lives on his horse and rarely walks, it is unnecessary to wear thick shooting-boots. They had a bad time, I fear, walking back to railhead, but we really could not provide horses or boots for all of them.

The Divisional Staff moved forward to about half a mile beyond the Boer camp and bivouacked in a wooded dell by the river. It was, even here, pretty stinky, and we put it down to the numerous swollen carcasses that were polluting the stream. But even when these had been removed with long poles an appalling smell remained; and it was not till we investigated some strange-looking objects sticking out of the bank that we discovered the reason: they were five pairs of dead men's legs, belonging, as we subsequently found, to some mounted infantrymen who had been killed and roughly buried by the Boers in the fight of nine days before.

The next six days were chiefly spent, so far as I was concerned, in surveying and sketching the locality, and on 7th March we moved off with the rest of the army—covering them from the right bank of the Modder—in the direction of Bloemfontein. Here we arrived on the 13th, having done a little fighting at Poplar Grove on the 7th and taken a nominal part merely in the action of Driefontein on the 10th.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE COLVILE EPISODES.

AND now began for poor Sir Henry Colville a series of episodes which, after bringing down on his head most unjustifiable censure from the authorities, culminated in his being deprived of his command and being sent out of the country. I venture to give a whole chapter to the subject; for the matter was later brought up in Parliament and led to a good deal of misapprehension. Even the 'Times History of the Boer War,' although I supplied the writers with accurate details, gave an unfair judgment, preferring to put its own colouring on the matter.

Now Colville—whom I had already known in the regiment for seventeen years—was, first and foremost, an excellent professional soldier, with plenty of experience. He was a many-sided person, too: an aeronaut, a writer, an acrobat, a yachtsman, a bit of an artist, an actor and a first-rate carpenter and mechanic; he was, besides, gifted with dare-devil pluck, such as walking on impossibly narrow ledges on high buildings, snap-shotting charging bulls from the front and at very close quarters in Spanish arenas, riding through fanatical Moorish country in disguise, honeymooning by balloon and doing various other risky things just for the pleasure of the danger in them. He was absolutely fearless under fire; and a wicked story which had been

put about that he was 'gun-shy' at the Modder fight was, flatly, a lie, for I was there at the time and saw what happened. He had been Governor of Uganda, too, and had declared war on, and beaten, that unpleasant savage Kabarega at a period when the country was practically unknown; and he had had remarkably few troops to do it with. He had also a keen sense of satiric humour and unfortunately a bitter tongue when he chose, and he could not stand stupid people; but he was an excellent companion when you knew him well—as I did, for I had often stayed with him at his house near Bagshot and on board his yacht. In fact his old mother once told me that I was his only friend. I must, however, in justice add that in South Africa he seemed to care little or nothing for the comfort or well-being of his officers and men—except that they must have enough rations to fight on. He showed himself but rarely, and never inspected his troops. In fact he seemed to look upon war as a series of problems which had to be coldly solved by the intellect alone, and upon his troops as so many pawns to do it with; and he troubled himself but rarely about the human side.

A man of this type was not likely to be popular. The ordinary man was rather afraid of him, whilst respecting him at a distance; and stories were put about, mostly with only a substratum of truth, which did him no good at Army Headquarters. He had been very ill in Uganda, was found wandering about in a state of delirium and of nature in the forest at night, and his nerves had not really recovered when, from commanding the Infantry Brigade at Gibraltar, he was sent to South Africa. He was all right and in the best of spirits on the way out; but I soon noticed that he was becoming irritable and nervous, and later on he had fits of bad temper which were quite a new experience to me.

I have given this sketch of his character because

I think it had something to do with the subsequent troubles, and judging from his poor opinion of some of his superiors—which he did not always keep to himself—his relations with Headquarters were not likely to be of the best.

The first trouble started with our advance from Paardeberg. Our division had orders to keep abreast, on the north bank of the Modder, with the rest of the army on the south; and though Colville was chafing to get on to deal with a large force of Boers ahead of him, he considered he was bound by his orders to wait for the others—who *would* not move on. The Boers cleared out, and Lord Roberts was annoyed, because Colville had not pushed on in time to catch them. (This, by the way, would have been impossible in any case, for although the Mounted Infantry had been placed under Colville's orders, Kitchener had, without letting us know, given them direct orders to do something quite different !)

Worse was to come at Bloemfontein : the Sannah's Post business. We had been there about a fortnight, doing our best to fill up the ranks, and especially to get our half-starved transport animals into decent condition, when we suddenly received orders to start at sunrise on the following morning and go to the assistance of General Broadwood's cavalry column, which, in retiring from Thabanchu, some thirty-five miles east of Bloemfontein, was being hard pressed by a large force of Boers. We accordingly moved off and reached a hamlet called Springfield about 9.30 o'clock. Here we heard that Broadwood had an hour before fallen into an (entirely distinct) ambush near Sannah's Post waterworks and had lost a lot of men and several guns. Leaving the division to follow, Colville with his Staff cantered on to Boesman's Kop, a low hill seven miles on, at the junction of the roads north-east to Waterval and east to the waterworks; from here we could see the whole country, including the dust of the victori-

ous Boer column trekking away north-eastwards from the waterworks, about eight miles off. After getting what information he could from Colonel Martyr in charge of some Mounted Infantry there—for Broadwood himself refused to come to Colville, saying he was too tired (!)—Sir Henry decided to move to Waterval as being a forlorn chance of cutting off the Boers. Our infantry had not yet arrived; it was a very hot day, and when they did reach Boesman's Kop they had to halt and get some food after their sixteen-mile march, and the transport animals and other horses had to water.

To cut a long story short, we did get to Waterval, after some fighting, by nightfall, but the Boers were by that time some twelve miles off with the captured guns; and French's cavalry, which had been promised us for that evening, did not turn up till nine next morning, far too late, of course, to do any good. Yet Colville got into serious trouble with Lord Roberts for not having recaptured the guns, though they were never nearer to his infantry than ten to fifteen miles, and he had no mounted troops!

Later on, the division was sent on a forced march to break up a reported Boer conference about twelve miles out of Bloemfontein; but this again was a failure, for there were no Boers there.

Then the Q.M.G. authorities reported to Lord Roberts that our transport animals were in a very bad state, and without further inquiry poor Major S. S. Long, our very hard-working transport officer, was sacked. Of course our animals were in a bad state; we could not get the poor over-worked beasts either replaced or properly fed, for forage was very short. As it was, three half-starved mules had to do the work of five good ones, and Long had been doing his very best to represent this to the Director of Transport for weeks past, with the only result that he got the sack for inefficiency! Colville, of course, stuck up fiercely for Long, and the latter was

eventually only superseded and not sacked; but the incident did not improve relations between himself and the G.H.Q.

On 24th April the division, minus the 19th Brigade, was sent off eastwards again to support Ian Hamilton's column, and after five or six days at Sannah's Post we were told to move on to Winburg. The general advance on Pretoria had begun.

Looking back on it all from thirty years afterwards, it seems to me wonderful that our troops managed to advance more or less cohesively across the huge tract of Free State country between Bloemfontein and the Transvaal; for the Staff work at General Headquarters left a great deal to be desired, and in this I think I shall be borne out by most soldiers 'in the know.' There were some first-rate Staff officers there, and if they had been left alone to organise the Staff and see that it ran properly all would have been well. But the Commander-in-Chief's Staff had apparently—and especially whilst the army was halted in Bloemfontein—been increased by a number of young officers—and even civilians—the social rank of most of whom was far above their military capacity or training. There was nothing really for them to do; but in their anxiety to be of use they got themselves attached to various branches of the Headquarters Staff, and, with the best intentions, only succeeded in cluttering up much of their work. In fact there were too many cooks, and many inefficient ones at that. Poor Colonel Kelly, the thoroughly efficient A.G. at G.H.Q., tried, we heard, to put matters straight and get some organisation into it all; but he only received a severe snub for his pains, and was told that if he interfered he would not be allowed to come up-country.

The channels of communication were ill-defined. One day we would get an operation order signed

(rightly) by (or for) the Chief of the Staff (nominally Kitchener); the next order might be signed by the Military Secretary; and the third by somebody unknown 'for A.A.G.'—the three orders bearing contradictory instructions and internal evidence that the three signatories had not even consulted each other on the matter. And what used to drive us to impotent fury was receiving a 'clear-the-line' message from one of the G.H.Q. boys on private and personal matters. Literally, one day whilst actually engaged in an encounter with the enemy, whilst our heliograph was at its busiest, a 'clear-the-line' message came through from G.H.Q. (stopping, of course, all our fighting-messages for the time being) from a certain young lordling, asking Mr — (a young Yeomanry officer with us) to come and dine with him when he got back to Bloemfontein. In the light of after experience also I am sure that G.H.Q. tried directly to control far too many units, and centralised its work much too much, descending into small details when giving out orders instead of confining itself to broad instructions and providing the material on which the units of the force could draw. But then, however good the troops, there always *has* been trouble at G.H.Q.—ever since the days of Xenophon. As we know, even the German G.H.Q. in the Great War suffered more than most people from want of control power and definition of authority.

To return. Before arriving at Winburg (6th May) we had a little fight at Baviansberg, which resulted in clearing Ian Hamilton's force in front of us with but a very few casualties. But Colville's position was becoming difficult; for, the 19th Brigade having been taken away, the division consisted of only four weak battalions of the Highland Brigade, a handful of mounted infantry and two naval guns. Nor was Macdonald an easy Brigadier to control. He strongly



disliked Colville, and, as I found out (and reported), often communicated with G.H.Q. behind his back in terms none too complimentary to him. But we hoped that the division would be restored to its proper strength before long, as the Staff situation was really getting rather impossible—especially as Ian Hamilton, junior to Colville, was immediately in front of us commanding a much larger force, including our missing brigade.

We stayed at Winburg for sixteen days, much troubled by the everlasting supplies question; for the promised supplies had a habit of not turning up, and when they did so at last, we were ordered to take more days' supplies than our transport wagons would hold. We also had orders by proclamation to give a free pass to any Boer who gave up 'a firearm' and promised not to fight again; and this fatuous order had to be carried out—mostly by myself. Day after day grinning Boers would arrive with their great-grandfather's rusty old muzzle-loaders, or rabbit-rifles, or ancient muskets for which all ammunition had long ago vanished; and, having received their passes, they would trot joyfully home, dig up the brand-new Mausers buried in their back gardens and rejoin their commandos armed with a bit of paper entitling them to go anywhere—even into a British camp! I need hardly say I reported at once to G.H.Q. this old-musket fraud, but got no satisfaction; and for months afterwards fully armed Boers used on occasion to be taken prisoner by our succeeding troops, and when they were searched produced their passes with my signature—for which, if you please, *I*, and not G.H.Q., was severely blamed.

The division had by this time been increased by a whole field battery and about forty Eastern Province Horse; but the 13th Battalion of Yeomanry which had been promised us had not turned up, so our grand total did not amount to more than

about 3500 men, including three miles of transport wagons (mules and oxen); for it must be remembered that where one would require only two horses to draw a cart on a European road, certainly six mules would be necessary to drag it over the unmetalled South African tracks which go by the name of roads, or across the rough country that constitutes the whole of the Free State veld; and all our second-line supplies were brought along by ox-convoy—to each wagon sixteen pairs of oxen who could only move at two miles an hour.

Leaving Winburg on 22nd May we made a bee-line for Lindley, and reached it four days later, though we had a bit of a fight on the Blaauwberg before we got there. There must have been something curious in the atmosphere that morning, for we one and all over-estimated ranges in the strangest way. Grant, in trying to shell the opposing Boers out of their position, estimated the distance at 8000 yards for his naval cow-guns,<sup>1</sup> and his first shells went right over the hills and clean out of sight. Then we of the Staff moved up to a point that we thought was about 4000 yards from Brother Boer; but we were quickly undeceived by a shower of bullets which could not have come from farther off than 2000 yards. (One bullet, by the way, only missed my ankle by one inch.)

It did not take long to outflank the Boers on their kopjes, and they retired hastily, a black column of horsemen and wagons just out of reach of our infantry's fire; and, thanks to our long-expected battalion of Yeomanry not yet having reached us, we had next to no mounted men with which to catch them. Lindley, only a few miles beyond, was occupied without loss; but the inhabitants were not at all responsive, for the town had been occupied by alternate bodies of Boers and English for the

<sup>1</sup> So called because they (60-pounders) were drawn by oxen.

last week,<sup>1</sup> and each force had treated the town as hostile. Next day we had a long trek, with Boers on both flanks and occasional fighting, to Rhenoster (Rhinoceros) River, getting in after dark, and there we lay for the night.

It was so cold, I remember, that when I awoke in the early morning the first thing that struck me was that I had icicles on my moustache. The next thing was that there were three men standing over me, one being my faithful half-caste scout, Tom Lafleur, and the other two strange Englishmen in nice new uniforms. They handed me a note, which ran as follows :—

“Col. Spragge to General Colville. Found no one in Lindley but Boers—have 500 men but only one day's food, have stopped three miles back on Kroonstadt road. I want help to get out without great loss. B. Spragge, Lt.-Col. 27/5/1900.”

Spragge ? Spragge ? Who the devil was Spragge ? The two troopers supplied the answer—“commanding 13th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry”—our long-expected mounted troops ! So, sending on Tom at once with the note to Sir Henry, I cross-examined the messengers, who, of course, did not know the contents of the note. “Was the battalion surrounded ?” “Surrounded ? No, sir,” wide-eyed astonishment at such a question. “Have you had heavy losses ?” “Oh no, sir, I don't think we've lost a man.” “Any Boers attacking you ?” “No, sir, none. There were a few in Lindley, we heard, but we didn't see any.” And thus it came out that the battalion was comfortably encamped some way out of Lindley and had not had any fighting at all. Their wagons were all right, as far as the men knew, and they had had their rations all right. The matter was a complete puzzle ; and I went, of

<sup>1</sup> Ian Hamilton's force had passed through two days before.

course, to Sir Henry and told him what the troopers had said. Ewart had another go at them, but extracted no more.

As it presented itself to Colvile—and to all of his Staff as well—the situation was as follows :—

1. We wanted the Yeomanry badly, and would do much to help them. But—
2. First and foremost, we were due at Heilbron to-morrow ; this as forming part of the general advance. If we disobeyed orders and turned back, we incurred a serious responsibility and might leave an important gap in the general line.
3. In spite of Spragge's somewhat alarmist note, he appeared to be in no danger whatever, and could fall back on Kroonstad.
4. We were very short of food ourselves.
5. If we sent a convoy back, with Boers swarming around, the escort with it would have to be so strong that we should probably be too weak to fight our own way into Heilbron ; in fact it was a case either of the whole force going back, or none.

So without the smallest objection on the part of any of us the General sent a note in triplicate—by one of my Kaffir scouts and by the two troopers—to Spragge, saying that we could not help him (owing to the above reasons), and if he could not join us at Heilbron he must fall back on Kroonstad. As a matter of fact, although ordered to disperse, none of the messengers got through owing to their being perpetually headed off by Boers, and they rejoined us at night.

We had hard and complicated fighting that day and only did four miles ; for the Boers<sup>1</sup> held up our small force on a series of heights which had to

<sup>1</sup> I found out afterwards that they were nearly 4000 strong, and included commandos under Christian de Wet and four other well-known Boer Generals—besides President Steyn.

be outflanked one by one. Colville handled the command most ingeniously, manœuvring our great caterpillar of a convoy with much skill, so that it was always protected by someone in spite of the Boer dashes, and we encamped on the Roodepoort ridge. Next day we moved off at 5.45 A.M., and after another very tiring day, during which the enemy harassed us unmercifully, we marched into Heilbron, up to time, at 8.30 at night: rather a good performance, we thought. Our division, in spite of being dead tired and short of food, and in spite of all opposition, had carried out its orders.

And now for the sequel of the Spragge incident.

As we were soon to hear, Spragge's entire force was shortly afterwards surrounded and taken prisoners. Lord Roberts ascribed the whole of this disaster to Colville, and, on the latter's subsequent arrival at Pretoria, cast the whole blame on him and sent him home—or rather back to his command at Gibraltar. Later on, after a Court of Enquiry on the Spragge affair had been held (without Colville being represented on it), the Secretary of State for War, after reading the Report and on Lord Roberts' recommendation, relieved Sir Henry of his command at Gibraltar. This was done by suggesting that Colville should resign it, and when the latter, smarting under a sense of serious injustice, refused to do so, he was dismissed and ordered home.

Furious at his treatment, Colville did a foolish thing. On his way home from Gib. he wrote a stinging article on the subject, more than hinting that Lord Roberts was particularly irritated because the Yeomanry battalion contained a number of (socially) highly placed officers, and on arrival home gave it to Reuter's correspondent to publish. The official answer to this—as might have been expected—was to place him on retired pay. Some friends of Colville took the matter up and got a question

asked about it in Parliament—with an interesting debate as the result. But Colville's defenders in the House were necessarily not well acquainted with some details which the authorities brought up, and were unable to counter certain accusations about other matters to which there was really an excellent answer. And the thing fizzled out, to Colville's detriment.

I happened to meet (whilst still in South Africa, 10th November 1900) an officer who had been with Spragge and had been subsequently released, and he told me some interesting details of the affair. It appeared that Spragge had received at Kroonstad (and actually shown to my informant) a telegram addressed to himself *by name* and signed 'Colville' (with two l's), dated Lindley, 23rd May, saying he was greatly in want of mounted troops and Spragge was to come to Lindley at once. He had accordingly hastened to Lindley. Now Colville did not know Spragge's name; had expected him to be at Ventersburg—not Kroonstad; and lastly, did not reach Lindley till the 26th, where there were no telegraph instruments, for I searched the post-office myself, and, in addition, found the wires had been cut. The telegram was therefore clearly a forgery; and I found that suspicion strongly pointed to a certain renegade Englishman at Lindley, whose name I know. (It is only fair to add that the Secretary of State for War—and probably Lord Roberts—believed that Colville had sent this telegram—of which much capital was made at the Court of Enquiry—and hence his 'crime' was much intensified in their eyes. The Court of Enquiry was unfortunately held before I could let Colville know of my discovery.)

There is still a mystery about this telegram, for at the Court of Enquiry it was stated that it had been addressed to the Commandant, Kroonstad, telling him to order Spragge's Yeomanry to Lindley. There seems a strong subsequent suspicion that it

was sent by Headquarters itself, who had omitted to let Colvile know of its despatch. This would cancel my friend's story; but then why did the Court of Enquiry not know it? For they genuinely believed that Colvile had sent it. Was its history 'burked' in any way? On the other hand, Headquarters could not have known when Colvile would arrive in Lindley.

The officer also told me that his C.O. had, strongly against the advice of all his other officers, insisted on remaining just outside Lindley when the Boers began to gather round him, saying that if he lost a single wagon by retiring he would lose his honour. He had then taken up a defensive position on the hills and been surrounded; and after a certain amount of firing a corporal in charge of one of his subordinate posts had, without orders, hoisted a white flag. The Boers had then come up without firing, and the remainder of the Yeomanry could not fire on them because of the white flag. Altogether it was a miserable business. But Colonel Spragge received a decoration.

Colvile lived on in retirement, nursing a very sore heart, for another seven years. He opened the question again by appealing to King Edward, expressing his regret for having written that article and explaining about the telegram; but it was of no use—the Secretary of State "saw no reason to alter his decision." Eventually he threw himself with his usual energy into the development of the motor-bicycle, which was then coming to the front; and in trying to set up a 'record,' he fizzed along a country road at full speed *on the wrong side* of the road—just like his usual recklessness of consequences—crashed into a motor-car coming out of a side-road (it happened to be Sir Henry Rawlinson's) and was killed on the spot.

## CHAPTER XXI.

PRETORIA AND THE EASTERN LINES OF  
COMMUNICATION.

To return to Heilbron (Colville still commanding).

Here we stayed for exactly a month (29th May to 28th June). I will not try to describe the events in detail; but we were at times in the position of a beleaguered force, at times a small garrison with nothing to do, and at times the centre of movements by all sorts of people, though we did not move ourselves.

On our arrival we had two days' rations left. By strenuous efforts—commandeering from the inhabitants, buying when we could, &c., we raised another four days' supplies; and we made these six days' supplies last for twenty-one. So it was not surprising that we were very hungry at times—and cold, too, for we were now in midwinter. I remember that one day, when we were at our hungriest, a telegram from G.H.Q. passed through our wire to the Director of Supplies: "Send up at once (so many) boxes (of delicacies of all sorts), including 160 tins of jam—strawberry, apricot and greengage preferred." And *we* had not seen jam, let alone delicacies of any sort, for months! That wire rankled in our bosoms for many weeks. The Director of Supplies on the railway meanwhile made up a convoy for us; but as my intelligence boys (mostly natives) kept us quite well supplied with informa-



tion, we knew that there were some big commandos between the railway and ourselves. Colville therefore wired more than once telling them this, urging them not to send the convoy without a very strong escort, and saying that unless they could do this they had better not send at all—at all events not for the present. In spite of this the convoy was sent off without our being told when, or by which road it was coming, and with a wretched little escort. It had not gone far before it was surrounded by nearly a thousand Boers under Steinkamp, and all the fifty-six wagons were captured. What is hardly credible is that the blame for the loss of this convoy, as well as for the loss of the Yeomanry, was, we were told, laid by G.H.Q. on Colville's shoulders. Verily it was a case of "Give a dog a bad name," &c.

We hardly fired a shot during the whole month. Perhaps it was as well we had no fighting, as we had very little ammunition left. One morning, when the air was rife with rumours of a big Boer concentration and attack on the town, the bluejackets with the cow-guns, being armed with powerful naval telescopes, reported with some excitement that a big Boer gun was being mounted on the skyline several miles off, and might they have a shot at it? Certainly. And two or three rounds were fired at it, with no response; it was strangely quiet. So the expert advice of Lovat's Scouts (who had luckily arrived a day or two before) was enlisted, and several of these professional Highland stalkers were sent out, whilst the garrison was told to stand by. Half an hour afterwards the Scotsmen returned grinning; for the Boer 'gun' was only a farmer's cart which had just been placed there with its shafts in the air.

Many old friends turned up during that month, including, twice, Methuen's column, which was sent to help us—rather unnecessarily in fact, for we had not asked for help. I find in my diary of that time the names of E. Ellice (an old Grenadier friend, come



SCENES IN A "DISTURBED DISTRICT," ORANGE FREE STATE, 1900.

(Part of a drawing by the Author.)



out with Lovat); Weld-Blundell, the African explorer (and present yacht owner); Altham of the I.D.; Younghusband, late of the Staff College; Jack Poynder (now Islington), an old friend; Bill Duncombe; Brian (Camel Corps and 10th Hussars); Benson the gunner, a charming fellow and good soldier—killed afterwards; George Essex, late Grenadiers; and many others.

What remained of the division was broken up on 28th June, and after a very cold night journey in open trucks—for the railway from Heilbron was now working—Colville and his Staff reached Pretoria on the following morning. Here the General had his interview with Lord Roberts—who expressed no appreciation of all the division's hard work and fighting—and received his *congé*. Next day he left for Cape Town, his Staff being distributed to various duties. As for myself, I was told off as Provost-Marshal of Pretoria, under Maxwell (Sir John, an old Egyptian friend), who was Governor of the town.

I took up my duties at once, and found I was in for some jolly hard work, 9.30 to 7.30—besides extras—being my regular hours for weeks to come. I found no organisation at all in the office—very little information, no lists of suspects, loyalists or enemies in the town and hardly anybody to refer to when streams of people poured in, all demanding passes, or favours, or the settlement of complicated questions about which I knew nothing. My staff consisted of one officer and, as far as I remember, only one clerk. Also, there were two Kings in Brentford; for whilst I tried to deal with the civil side, there was also a Military Provost-Marshal, whose duties largely overlapped mine. Captain Walter Bonham (Essex Regiment), a dear good fellow and my assistant, had been there for a week or two and had picked up a smattering of 'Who's Who' in Pretoria; but the information was in his own head

and not on paper—so that when he happened to be away on duty, as he often was, nobody knew anything. I had to increase the staff considerably and set them down to compiling lists while I tackled the callers, and eventually we had it in good running order; but it necessarily took time. It was difficult and responsible work, too, issuing passes, for with the infinite gradations between loyalty and disloyalty among Britons, Boers, natives, Jews, Afrianders, Hollanders, Anglo-Dutch, foreigners and what-not, and the plausible stories that people told—all of which had to be investigated—one ran the risk of making a serious mistake.

One case was rather typical. One fine afternoon, when I was getting somewhat weary of interviewing surly Boers and smelly Kaffirs, a lady was announced as being desirous of an interview. I bade her enter, and in sailed a decidedly pretty little woman, beautifully dressed in half-mourning, with masses of fair hair and a delicious aroma of violets surrounding her. She announced herself as Madame Van Riebeck, sank gracefully into a chair, touched her eyes every now and then with a lace handkerchief and proceeded to unfold her tale of woe. Her husband, it appeared, was inevitably and naturally—here she heaved a little sigh and glanced deprecatingly at me—fighting on the Boer side. She had heard a rumour that he had been severely wounded—she did not know whereabouts—and had consequently flown to me at once for information; perhaps I would be so very kind as to give her a pass so that she could go and nurse him—she was so devoted to him—handkerchief again, &c.

Much touched by this vision of beauty in distress, I sympathised deeply with her, and broke it to her gently that the Boers were not in the habit of sending their casualty lists in to me; but if I heard anything I would at once communicate with her. She thanked me gratefully and withdrew; and I immediately

sent one of my trusty men after her to shadow her and make inquiries. He returned next day with the information that she lived in a house on the eastern outskirts of Pretoria, and was reported not only to be in nightly communication with the enemy, but also to receive repeated visits from her husband. This little game I therefore put a stop to without delay. I can only imagine that the reason for her visit to me was that her goings-on had got bruited abroad, and that she wished to impress on me that such stories, if they reached my ears, could not possibly be true. Unfortunately she rather overdid it.

Another of my visitors was von Veldtheim,<sup>1</sup> a German ex-officer, who had murdered one of the Joel brothers a year or two before and had been let out of prison on parole. He asked to see me privately, and, in order to prove his entire respectability, showed me letters from various German countesses and princesses, all expressed in the most affectionate terms. He certainly was a very good-looking fellow, and I believe had a great reputation as a lady-killer. He asked for a pass, to Cape Town as far as I remember; but as he was still breathing threats of bodily violence against another of the Joels, who according to him had treated him abominably, I thought it better not to comply with his request.

Then my best man, Sergeant Bettington, was had up for murdering a native. Bettington, of the Cape Mounted Rifles, a gentleman by birth, had first come into notice during our weeks of inaction on the Modder River by developing a taste for riding about between the Boer lines and our own—chiefly with the object of capturing stray Boers and particularly their horses. On one occasion, when I was commanding our battalion outpost-line, he had nearly brought on a general action by bringing out a swarm of irritated Boers on his heels; and we,

<sup>1</sup> I am uncertain as to the spelling of his name.

of course, had to resort to heavy firing in order to cover his retreat, much to the disturbance of our battalion and brigade headquarters. Next time I saw him was at Paardeberg, so, as he seemed to be a free-lance, belonging to nobody in particular, I annexed him and put him in charge of what I believe was known as 'Gleichen's Horse'—a collection of picturesque ragamuffins, black, brown and white, who acted as scouts and Intelligence Agents. He did thundering well all through, took messages through the Boer lines and was always to the fore in the most dangerous jobs, and I took him on to Pretoria. Here, not finding enough exciting work to do, he prowled about amongst the Kaffirs, and in the course of a row in a native dancing haunt, being attacked by several of them at once, he shot one of them dead. He was tried for his life and acquitted; but Pretoria was too hot for him, and he had to go down country, much to my regret. I got him a D.C.M., and he was fully engaged to the end of the war. After escaping, however, without a wound, his horse fell on him in an icy spruit and he lost his leg. He used to write to me occasionally bewailing his inactivity; but he did not live long, and died a few years after the end of the war.

I stayed at Pretoria till my office was split up on 20th August, and was then appointed Intelligence Officer to a big section of the Eastern Line of Communications, under Colonel Barker, R.E., late C.R.E. 9th Division. This was also a pretty busy job, involving endless travelling up and down the line between Pretoria and Machadodorp and trying to keep track of the numerous commandos who were crossing and recrossing the line, sometimes pulling up the rails, sometimes attacking posts and even trains and making themselves a general nuisance. Once we had a 'regrettable incident.' I had got wind through my boys of a small commando who intended to damage the line at a certain place; so

I wired to the Railway Staff Officers at the stations on either side to that effect, and, naturally thinking that they would warn the trains running over that section, omitted to tell them in so many words to do so. Neither of them did it, and unfortunately my information proved correct; for a train containing some Coldstream was held up and fired on by the Boers, who killed and wounded a few of our men. I am afraid poor Barker got the blame for it, though I suppose it was my fault for presupposing normal intelligence on the part of the Railway Staff Officers. Was it?

On another occasion, accompanied by about twenty men, I paid a surprise visit to a German Mission station at Botsabelo, not far from Middelburg. My boys had reported that the Boers were using this place as a depôt, and had not only stored a lot of arms and ammunition there, but had also deposited part of the (somewhat mythical) treasure in gold that President Krüger had carried away with him on bolting from Pretoria. A party of Boers had only just left, and we found no arms or gold there that time; but I made the acquaintance of the pastor, Dr Nauhaus, a gentle old man with a long white beard, who gave me his experiences in dealing with natives. He said he had come out forty years before with enthusiastic ideas about converting the natives to Christianity and making good citizens of them. But, he added sadly, he had no delusions left, and his life had been practically wasted. He had brought up and educated I do not know how many natives in the Christian faith, and tried to place them in situations where they would be of value to the community—servants, grooms, shop-boys, tradesmen, farmers; he had even got some of his best boys trained as clerks, accountants and school teachers. And in *every single case* where they were placed in a position of trust they had failed! They had either taken to drink, or stolen, or misbehaved,



or become incurably lazy. He was most emphatic in declaring that there was not one exception; and he was nearly heart-broken over the failures of his flock. He had done his best, but he had come to the conclusion that after the age of sixteen or so no Kaffir could be depended on. Everyone of them slid back, cast off his civilisation and returned to savagery. It was rather enlightening, especially as it was his opinion that half-breeds were very much better than their black brethren.

Another diversion for my men was rounding up loose Boer cattle and horses; and we managed to catch and sell about £400 worth of poor stuff—which, much to our disappointment, we had to hand over to Pretoria instead of benefiting our troops therewith. Prisoners, flags of truce, passes, scouting, intelligence work, supplies, communications with the enemy on all sorts of subjects, cartage and disposal of Boer women (the worst trial<sup>1</sup>) filled up our days without ceasing. I thought I should be there till the end of the war, which we all thought would be in two or three months. So I was rather surprised, towards the end of November, to receive a telegram from Lord Cromer offering me a billet on the Headquarters Staff of the Egyptian Army in Cairo.

After a short cogitation I accepted it, and, having got official leave, I started for home *viâ* Natal. I was lucky in being able to put in a few days visiting Ladysmith, Waggon Hill, Spion Kop and other scenes of fighting.<sup>2</sup> Before long I was on my way *viâ* Durban to the Cape, and thence in the good ship *Briton* to England, where I arrived about the middle of December (1900).

<sup>1</sup> They were absolutely impossible to deal with—much worse than their men-folk; and, in addition, had no idea whatever of cleanliness.

<sup>2</sup> In one of the Boer trenches on Pieter's Hill I found a pair of lady's stays, with a lot of Mauser cartridge-cases and clips alongside. I think this is fairly good evidence that Boer women on occasion fought in the trenches—though this was always strenuously denied by the enemy.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## EGYPT AND THE SUDAN.

THE few weeks I spent in England between arriving from South Africa and departing for Egypt were marked by the death of the Queen. Her Majesty had bidden me to Osborne for a night on my return. During the few minutes that I spent with her—for she did not as usual come down to dinner—in recounting my little adventures with the Boers and discussing the death of poor ‘Christ’l,’<sup>1</sup> it struck me that she was looking much shrunken and that her voice had faded; but her colour was good, and there was no sign of any brain trouble. I little thought it would be the last time I should see her alive; but less than a fortnight afterwards<sup>2</sup> she had passed away, and I went down again to Osborne on the 30th January for the funeral ceremonies. A large number of Royalties (including the German Emperor) had arrived, and many of the guests had to be accommodated in private houses round Cowes. The Emperor was, of course, much interested in the Boer War, and after dinner I found myself giving a lecture on the subject to him and to King Edward, seated amicably together on a sofa. The Emperor’s action in throwing over some important engagements in Germany and hastening to Osborne

<sup>1</sup> Prince Christian Victor, Rifle Brigade, who had died in South Africa some six weeks before.

<sup>2</sup> 22nd January.

was much appreciated in England, and went far to rehabilitate him in British eyes ; for recently he had been extremely unpopular—I forget at this moment why. Next morning King Edward, with his usual tact, took advantage of this, and, *coram populo*, the two sovereigns strolled about with their arms round each other's waists (did I hear somebody murmur 'eyewash' ?).

On 1st February, a cold but beautifully quiet day, the procession started from Osborne for the wharf at Cowes, and the coffin was there placed on board the *Victoria and Albert*. The Royal yacht steamed very slowly, and we took two hours to get across to Portsmouth. My sympathies went out to the naval officer whose duty it was to stand motionless in the extreme bows as look-out, and without a greatcoat—for the air was icy ; but what was really impressive was steaming in dead silence between the lines of battleships, all flags at half-mast and all yards manned, with lovely evening lights on the flat calm sea and on Portsmouth ahead, and with a glorious sunset on the port quarter over Osborne and the Isle of Wight : it was in truth a magnificent setting for the funeral of a great sea Queen.

Next day we all accompanied the coffin by train to Victoria, and thence went the procession, slowly and on foot, to Paddington, myself being immediately on the left rear of the gun-carriage, with the King, the Emperor and the Duke of Connaught, all three mounted, just behind. It was rather a long walk for some of the elderly members, and one or two were a good deal exhausted on arrival. But the respectful sorrow of the vast crowds that lined the route was very touching, and for the first time the note of gloom at a public funeral was lifted by the banners and window hangings being of purple or violet and not of black. At Windsor station, however, there occurred an unfortunate incident, for the shaft-horse of the R.H.A. gun-carriage on

which the coffin was placed absolutely refused to move. Whether he was stiff from standing in the cold for so long, or that the brake had been unintentionally left on (which I can hardly believe), or through the direct intervention of the Evil One—for the horse was a particularly good-tempered animal (so one of the detachment told me)—one cannot say. But, seeing that the horse had no intention of moving, the naval officer commanding the Bluejacket Guard of Honour had a brilliant idea, and, with the King's permission, got hold of some tow-ropes from the station-master, grounded arms and fell in his guard to draw the gun-carriage to St George's Chapel. Here, after a choral service, the coffin was left till the following Monday, when it was taken, again in procession, to its final resting-place at the Frogmore Mausoleum.

Three days afterwards I started for Egypt, and, with a break of travel in Italy for a few days, arrived at Port Said and Cairo on 17th February. Here I found, as I had already surmised, that my billet was to be that of Agent and Representative of the Sudan in Cairo, combined with the Directorship of Intelligence in Egypt and the Sudan—an appointment which suited my views down to the ground.

It was only a little more than two years since the Sudan had been conquered. In spite of my entreaties to Kitchener he had refused to let me come out for the final campaign of September 1898, so I had missed the battle of Omdurman and the taking of Khartoum. As elsewhere remarked, Kitchener entirely disapproved of a 'War Office spy' being anywhere near him, and, though we remained excellent friends to the last, he had absolutely declined letting me come out as representative of the home Intelligence Division. It was perhaps as well that the General Staff had not forced my services on him, for two or three others whom he had been obliged

by Highest Orders to accept were by *his* orders put on a steamer and not allowed to take part in any of the fighting; and, to add to their disgust, their steamer turned turtle and they lost all their kit.

Under the wise Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of January 1899, drawn up by Lord Cromer, the Sudan came under Anglo-Egyptian dominion with most of the power in British, and not in Egyptian, hands. My old friend Wingate—who was responsible for the very plucky final fight (November 1899) wherein the Khalifa and all his Dervish Emirs were killed—was now Governor-General in place of Kitchener, called to South Africa as Lord Roberts' Chief of the Staff. And under his energetic administration the Sudan was already beginning to take shape as a peaceful and more or less civilised Power. But, of course, a mass of Sudan correspondence was always being carried on with different authorities both in Egypt and in England; and it was my fate to act as the neck of the bottle in Cairo.

After being gazetted Kaimakam (Lieut.-Colonel) in the Egyptian Army (and soon afterwards promoted to Miralai, or Colonel), I took up the work with zest; and certainly there was plenty to do, for it was practically a new billet. Captain May, who was in Cairo responsible for the financial work of the Sudan, had grappled with the hundreds of questions which came pouring in to the best of his ability; but it was much too much for one man, and he handed me over the civilian but non-financial work with a sigh of relief. The office got gradually organised, and eventually I ran it with an Assistant Director of Intelligence (Captain H. H. Morant of the Durhams) and, later, Captain Amery of the Black Watch (brother of Mr L. S. Amery), one head clerk (an excellent Syrian named Naum Bey) and about a dozen other clerks—mostly Syrian Christians who had received a capital training in the American College in Beirut.

Whilst on the subject of clerks, I might note that Lord Cromer disapproved of too many Christians in our offices at Khartoum and Cairo, being of the opinion that we ought to have mostly Moslems,—in which I quite agreed. Accordingly at the next examination for clerks, I encouraged as many Mohammedans as I could to go in for it, and made a point of examining and marking the candidates' papers myself. The result was discouraging. There were three vacancies, for which eleven Moslems and three Christians competed. All three Christians got over 80 per cent of the marks; only one Moslem got over 50 per cent, and I simply *could* not wangle him in—his papers were so feeble. The agile-minded college-trained Syrians were head and shoulders above the stolid Azhar University-trained Egyptians and Arabs. All the same, for strength of character and general dependableness, I preferred the latter, and would much sooner have had them at my back in a row than the generally chicken-hearted Syrians.

My duties were various, usually comprising correspondence with would-be companies about the development of the land; getting and sending things up; boundaries; surveys; political questions with the Italians, Abyssinians and others; petitions innumerable; locusts and how to deal with them; agriculture and implements; game preservation and licences; journeys; passes; appointments; looking after Dervish prisoners; administration of Sinai Peninsula and its garrison—for I was *ex officio* Governor of Sinai, though I never found time to go there; and dozens of other subjects, ranging from signing a treaty with Eritrea down to choosing gramophone records and shepherds'-plaid trousers (!) for Azande chiefs on the Congo boundary.

In all the larger questions 'the Lord'<sup>1</sup> was my stand-by; and most days found me running across

<sup>1</sup> Lord Cromer was always known by the Egyptians as 'El Lurd.'

to the Agency to seek his wise advice on some broad question of principle, or even detail. One of his precepts stood me in good stead when it came to appointing civilians to the newly-formed Sudan Civil Service. "Take infinite trouble about getting the very best man procurable, and give him a free hand." The truth of this often came back to me, especially when contemplating certain other African possessions where out-of-the-way provinces had been handed over to men whose only qualification was that their fathers had done political service to the Government in power at the time—and with dire results. But I fancy things are done better nowadays.

I had the most enormous appreciation, respect and I think I may say devotion for Lord Cromer, and have always looked upon him as one of our very great men. Living in Cairo as I did for three years and in close touch with the Agency, I had many opportunities of seeing with what wonderful strength, yet most delicate tact, he dealt with the innumerable questions which he had to tackle. The commanding position of Great Britain in Egypt was anomalous and, as ever in Egypt, paradoxical; for though, nominally, the British Agent's position *vis-à-vis* to the Egyptian Government was not different from that of the representatives of other Powers, as a matter of fact he was, by force of circumstances and still more by force of character, by far the most powerful man in the country. Apart also from the difficult work of keeping a strong and directing—yet to the public almost invisible—hand on the Egyptian Ministers and officials, and particularly on that elusive, ever-intriguing and double-faced youth the Khedive, Abbas Hilmi, and his money-bags, the Lord had to deal with the foreign policy of Egypt and its relations with the other European Powers who were represented here by Ministers and Agents of very varying personality and occasional aggressiveness. Particularly and intentionally aggravating,

of course, was France, who, extremely annoyed with herself for not having accepted our invitation (in 1882 and again in 1883) to join us in restoring peace and a just administration to the country, visited her spleen in a series of irritating pin-pricks, chiefly by putting local obstacles in the way of reforms which we (and most of the other Powers) wished to carry out in Egypt. Relations were, of course, not so strained as in the days of Fashoda three years before, but it is a fact, I believe, that M. Cogordan, the charming and impartially-minded French Minister of those days, was relieved of his duties because he was too friendly with the British Agency.

And now, in addition to all his other work, Lord Cromer had, directly and indirectly, to deal with the development and strengthening of the Sudanese framework. How he managed to get through his colossal labours was always a puzzle to me. I think he only did it by sticking to definite hours. He was always available in the mornings, but if you wanted to catch him, say, between four and six, he was never to be found for business—he was always playing tennis at the Gezira Club (he was then sixty), or had gone out for a long drive—and refused to discuss it under any circumstances till six o'clock.<sup>1</sup> And the dinners at the Agency were never prolonged; for at 9.55 the Lord would be seen wandering restlessly among his guests and conspicuously eyeing the watch in his hand until they all disappeared; and then he would go back to work.

He was excellently served by his British officials—Rennell Rodd as his Councillor, Jack Gorst at the Finance Ministry, Garstin at the Public Works, Machell (later my brother-in-law) at the Interior,

<sup>1</sup> Nor would he be disturbed when he had gone on leave. On one occasion, when he was fishing in Scotland, his Chargé d'Affaires found himself confronted with rather an awkward situation, and wired to the Lord for advice. The eagerly expected answer ran as follows: "I sometimes find lobworms quite useful for salmon"!



M'Ilwraith and Brunyaté at the Ministry of Justice, and many more; and, of course, by Wingate as Governor-General and Sirdar and Charles Fergusson (my old friend of the Grenadiers) as Adjutant-General. But with it all it was the Lord who was the backbone and foundation of the whole construction, and the benevolent despot who ruled over us his happy family; and we all felt that if anything happened to the Lord the bottom of our world would drop out.

Another very important point was that he was implicitly trusted, and his word and judgment accepted for everything, by the Foreign Office. No petty interference with *him* by the Foreign Office! On the contrary, it was he whose counsel was sought by the home authorities, and what he said *went*. I remember a little story he once told me himself which absolutely proves it, though he only told it me for the humour of the thing.

In 1892 the Khedive Tewfik was just dead, and Abbas had succeeded. By the solemn farce then in existence Turkey was supposed to be Egypt's Sovereign State, and the Sultan prepared and sent the usual Imperial Iradé appointing Tewfik's successor. It was going to come in a battleship and be saluted by all the guns at Alexandria, and it was going to be read out at a Grand Parade of all the troops at the Abdin Palace in Cairo; in fact there was to be a grand splash about it. Our Embassy in Constantinople had, however, managed to obtain a private view of the Iradé just before it started, and wired to Lord Cromer an urgent message that there was a certain statement in it (about frontiers) which was entirely wrong, and which would lead to serious trouble (as the Turks intended) if it were left in and read out to the assembled multitudes. The Lord quickly determined that, although there would be a considerable risk of trouble with the people, the Iradé must be stopped at all costs; and

he sent an urgent wire in cypher to Lord Salisbury asking his permission to do this. The battleship was then approaching Alexandria, and time was precious.

The telegram reached Lord Salisbury just as he was arriving at Beaulieu, his house on the Riviera. He had no secretary with him, and the code-book was in his despatch-box, but for the life of him he could not find the key. Seeing that the wire was marked "urgent" and signed "Cromer," *en clair*, in desperation he seized a poker and, aided by his daughter, Lady Gwendolen, with a variety of tools, made repeated assaults on the lock; but British workmanship was too good, and the lock refused to budge. At last, exhausted by his efforts and in complete ignorance of the subject, he sent off a telegram *en clair*: "Do as you like—Salisbury."

Lord Cromer did do as he liked; and, escorted by a squadron of British Lancers, he drove, just in time, to the palace and informed the youthful Khedive that if that sentence were read out there would be considerable trouble to follow for himself. Abbas was cowed and gave in, and the statement was duly expunged. All was well; but the story shows the degree of absolute trust that was reposed in the Lord by the head of the British Government.

May and June of my first year I spent at Khartoum—the first time I had been there, though we had been within 120 miles of it in 1885. It was marvellous to see what had already been accomplished. Besides the construction of the railway from Wadi Halfa across the Korosko Desert to Abu Hamed, Berber and Halfaya (just opposite Khartoum), and the peaceful organisation of the big provinces under British officers, the town of Khartoum had been resuscitated and laid out in squares and avenues, and numerous fine buildings erected, including the palace, where most of us of the Headquarters Staff lived. And here I met again many old friends of the Dongola campaign of five years before—Stanton, Governor

of Khartoum; 'Forty' Nason, Civil Secretary; Tony Markham, most efficient of A.D.C.'s; Slatin Pasha, now Inspector-General; Blunt, Director of Supplies; 'Monkey' Gordon, Director of Ordnance (come from Cairo with me); Milo Talbot, now Director of Surveys; and several others. Although, of course, it was roasting hot, we were all kept busy with plenty of work, and in this (Sir Reginald) Wingate as Sirdar and Governor-General showed us an excellent example. And we kept practically British hours all through. Ride at 7 A.M., British breakfast at 8, work 9 to 1, luncheon 1 to 2, a little work till 2.30—and then it really was too hot to work and we had an hour or two's siesta—tea and golf or squash-racquets or tennis till 6, work till 7.30 and generally work again after dinner.

We used to sleep on the roof—as a rule it was too hot in one's room; but on many nights we would be awakened by a *habûb*—a powerful wind bringing thick clouds of dust from the desert and followed by a short and tropical downpour of rain. This, if we did not bolt downstairs at the first warning, would speedily convert our dust-covered sheets into muddy ones. And sometimes these storms were serious. I find a note in my diary of 4th June: "Hell of storm began 7.15 P.M. Clouds of dust followed by hurricanes of rain. *Elfin* went ashore, *Sheikh* drifted 100 yards, several nuggers wrecked, 200,000 bricks spoilt, harîmat of XIII Sudanese bust." The latter catastrophe referred to the straw *tukls* (huts) and encampment of the ladies belonging to the black battalion in question; and for some reason difficult of apprehension by the mere white, the furious women turned on their (so-called) husbands when they came to the rescue and chased them away with kurbashes and sticks.

After a trip to Wad Médani on the Blue Nile, and after acquainting myself with details of administration and intelligence as far as I could, I returned

to Cairo and remained there till the end of the year. My work there was, however, pleasantly broken in November by a ten days' trip to Rome with Rennell Rodd and Harrington<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of negotiating a treaty between ourselves and Italy on the subject of Eritrean boundaries, tariffs and postal affairs. This was finally signed a month or two afterwards.

The winter passed most pleasantly with many festivities and social gatherings, and among others I met Cecil Rhodes and Dr Jameson for the first time. Rhodes had come there chiefly to discuss his great scheme of a Cape-to-Cairo railway, and I had a long talk with him as to the route it should take. It struck me that he had not much knowledge of the country between Uganda, Abyssinia and the Sudan, and I gave him some information which I think was quite new to him. However, he was very enthusiastic on his subject, and skimmed lightly over difficulties in the shape of swamps and hostile tribes, which personally I should have thought were practically insuperable at that period.

Here also I met that charming person Cecil Spring-Rice (eventually Ambassador to the U.S.A.), then British representative on the Caisse de la Dette; Johnnie Baird (now Lord Stonehaven, late Governor-General of Australia), who had been lent by the Diplomatic Service as youthful Secretary to Garstin, and accompanied him on his invaluable visits to the White and Blue Niles; Ferdinand von Müller, the very musical German Minister, a friendly creature; Mrs Elinor Glyn—full of her success with 'The Visits of Elizabeth'; General 'Reggie' Talbot and his delightful and beautiful wife; the Edward Cecils—both great friends of mine; the Findlays (later to go to Norway as British representatives during the war); Rumbold (now Ambassador in

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Harrington, our old Zeila friend of 1897 (*v. chap. xv.*), at that time British Minister at Addis Ababa.

Berlin), with whom I had many a game of squash ; and many others. It was indeed a cheery time, and, looking at my diary of those days, it seems as though I dined out practically every night. But I generally put in eight to ten hours' work besides ; for my day consisted of an early ride, breakfast at 8.30, work from 9 till 3 without a stop, then luncheon, then to the Gezira Club for active exercise, work for an hour or two before dinner and generally another hour and more afterwards ; so I think I fairly earned my keep—and also some leave.

This latter—after a short visit on duty to Khar-toum—I got between June and September, and spent partly in looking after the representative of the Sultan of Morocco for King Edward's Coronation, one Sidi Abdurrahman ben Abd es Sadek, an old acquaintance as it turned out, for he was Governor of Larache when I passed through there in 1893. It was Irwin, the Legation interpreter attached to the Mission, who really did all the hard work ; and he told me that when, on the first night of their arrival in London, he had distributed them to their respective bedrooms, he went round them afterwards to see whether they were all right. One and all of them complained of cold ; and no wonder, for they were all lying on top of their beds. The poor people had never seen a European bed before, and did not know they could get inside. And they were most grateful on being shown how. *My* chief difficulty, on the other hand, was to avoid being suffocated whenever I took the Moorish potentate out for a drive ; for he was a vast man and, as usual, wore the equivalent of four or five suits of clothes in the shape of haiks, jelabs, burnuses and shirts and drawers of all kinds. But the result was most impressive—in more senses than one.

In the event, of course, the King's Coronation in June had to be put off at the last minute, and my Moorish friend was consequently unable to stay for

the real one in August. But he had one pleasant evening at the opera with Miss Gertrude Bell ; for that marvellous lady, although she had never been in Morocco and knew no Moghrebbin dialect, conversed with him fluently in Quranic Arabic, and he, being of course a man of education, responded with ease.

After a pleasant trip to the Channel Islands with Colville in his yacht—we took fifty-six hours and a dead calm to get across in from Poole—I had some excellent grouse-shooting in Scotland, Westmorland and Cheshire, and after seeing Sceptre win the Leger returned to a very hot October in Cairo. December was marked by the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught at the opening of the wonderful Aswan Dam, but otherwise by nothing particular that I can remember—except the Ghatta duck-shoot.

These shoots were always capital fun. The Ghatta was a strip of broad shallow canal some fifteen miles north of Cairo, covered with reeds, and about seven miles long ; and to this we proceeded at 6 A.M. by a special train, which dropped the forty guns of which the party consisted at intervals here and there along the canal. All the ‘stands’ were marked and drawn for ; and if your stand happened to be on the far side of the canal it was quite exciting work to get there. For the only thing in the shape of a boat was a contraption looking like a badly-made coffin, leaking heavily at every joint. Into this you had to get with gun and ammunition and your retriever, and it was generally even money on whether you got to your stand dry, or sank gently in mid-water up to your waist and had to wade ashore (with no prospect of a change of clothes). I have omitted to mention, by the way, that the retriever was a human one, one of the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages who came swarming down on us on the chance of making a bit of money. I think the tariff was 2s. per head, and well they earned

it. For the water was desperately cold, and after one or two swims after dead or wounded birds you would see your retriever becoming first yellow, then green, and then light-blue (same colour as the galabiya which was his only garment), with his teeth chattering like castanets. There was a tradition that one unfortunate man had died from cold and exposure several years before; but our retrievers had evidently heard of this and were determined not to succumb, for after two or three swims they would generally refuse to do any more till they were fairly warm again; and I do not blame them.

We had all synchronised our watches before taking post, and at nine o'clock punctually we opened fire. The duck arose in myriads, and for the first ten minutes there was glorious shooting; but as they got higher and higher it became much more difficult to pull them down, and after an hour or two of occasional shots at a few almost impossible birds, including occasional pelicans or flamingoes, the shooting died down altogether, and we ate our sandwiches, giving our retrievers their thoroughly-earned luncheons as well. Then between 1 and 3 P.M. the duck began to come back, and the firing recommenced for a bit; but the banging frightened them away again, and by three it was generally over. Some of the guns were extraordinarily good shots—especially, I remember, M'Murdo of the Slavery Department—and our record bag whilst I was there amounted to about 1260 in the day.

Quail- and snipe-shooting there were, too, on occasion, but I never assisted at any phenomenal slaughter of these.

There was also a pack of hounds, generally the property of the cavalry regiment (at that time the 11th Hussars) quartered at Abbassiya, and with these we had occasional fun. They would hunt anything—fox, jackal or 'wolf,' but they were naturally a bit shy of the latter—an animal, *dib*

by name, who was much bigger than a jackal and had a touch in him of wolf and hyena—a savage and unsporting brute who rarely gave us a run. But on one occasion, when I was acting-whip, with a small and select field of about six, we pursued a huge fox out of the crops into the desert. The fellahin took no interest in the matter, but on its way the fox nearly ran into a Beduin encampment. In an instant the black tents were alive with excitement. Each of them disgorged three or four lithe brown youths, everyone armed with stick or hoe, and as the hunt swept along they and their papas all joined in; even some unveiled women and goats ran out to watch. And finally the patriarch, a magnificent old man with long grey beard, after a glance at the hunt, rushed to his camel, sprang on his back, jerked the astonished animal to his feet and away after the hounds—ropes, trappings, beard, flowing garments and all streaming in the breeze. It was a grand sight; but we did not kill, for the fox went to ground in a labyrinth of rocks before we could reach him.

Among my other duties was that of inspecting the Dervish prisoners, and for that purpose I used to travel about once a month to Rosetta, where they were confined to a sort of barracks, with plenty of room for exercise. As far as I remember, two of the Mahdi's sons and one of the Khalifa's, besides two or three formerly redoubtable Emirs, were here shut up; but the main prize, of course, was Osman Digna, of Eastern Sudan fame, who had at long last been run to ground and captured in 1900. For sixteen years he had been a thorn in our sides in the Suakin district and elsewhere—hounding on the local tribes, Hadendoa and other brave and savage races, urging them to the fight in the name of Allah and the Mahdi—and carefully keeping his precious body out of range of the bullets. But Burges and his police had caught him at last in his native hills; and here he was—a short but handsome white-



bearded old man with the fires of madness and fanaticism still smouldering in his eyes. He never would speak, not even to the other prisoners, and used to sit for hours cross-legged in a corner with the Quran in his lap, mumbling chapters of Holy Writ over to himself.<sup>1</sup>

Another interesting little trip I made was in the coastguard steam-yacht *Nur el Bahr* (Captain Curwen) from Alexandria to Sollum (on the Tripolitan frontier) and back. There was a question about the boundary there, and I went to reconnoitre; for nobody knew exactly how it ran. It was a wild deserted place, with only a hovel or two, and nobody there but three coastguardsmen in a hut. This boasted a visitors' book, it is true; but the last white visitor's name dated from two years back. There were no boundary posts, and the frontier had never been surveyed—in fact there was no proper map of the surroundings at all. All I could do was to make a rough sketch of the place and mark out a suggested line according to certain features stretching out into the desert close behind. I could not stay there, as the yacht's time was limited; and I could not go to Mersa Tobruk, a fine harbour some way farther on in Turkish territory, for, as bad luck would have it, some highly-placed Turkish officers were just then proceeding thither on duty; and it would not have looked well for an official Egyptian ship to be smelling about there just then. Dear old *Gem of the Sea*, she certainly was a graceful and beautiful boat in her lines; the Khedive Ismail had built her for the ladies of his harîm and decorated her internally like the boudoir of a cocotte; but she was the worst pitcher and roller that I have ever been in, and I verily believe I was the only person on board who was not seasick.

<sup>1</sup> Mr H. C. Jackson wrote a full and most interesting book about him, which came out only a few months before the death of the old madman (Methuen, 1926).

All along the coast the turquoise sea is a dream of loveliness, and so were the few little coves that we explored. Inland the ground was sparsely cultivated here and there by nomad Arabs; but there were still many remains of Roman underground granaries and water-tanks, for this was for many years the corn-land whence Imperial Rome drew her supplies.

Early in 1903 it was settled that Lord Cromer should go up to Khartoum and meet some of the Sudanese notables; and, although it was not given out, secret arrangements were made for his going right up the Nile to the Uganda frontier station of Gondókoró. And so it fell out. I was told off to go with him, and the invitation graciously included my sister Valda, who was just coming out to stay with me. Lady Cromer was also going, and so was Lady Wingate; so by the time we left Khartoum and headed south up the White Nile we were a fairly large party in our stern-wheel steamer. The trip was most delightful. We tied up every night at the bank, and stopped at all important stations, inspecting them and talking to the local worthies and, where required, giving them scarlet and gold 'robes of honour.' As we proceeded, the game increased in numbers and variety. Crocodiles were always with us; hippos began to appear about Lake No; and on the northern shores of the lake were cob and Mrs Grays (antelopes) innumerable—looking like large herds of cattle.

Renowned Fashoda (or rather Kodok, as it was now called) was not much to look at; for, with the exception of one small low hill, the ground was flat for miles. But there were hundreds of huts, and the Mek (King) of the Shilluks gave us a noble war-dance, his blue-black warriors, all six foot and over, painted partly white or smeared with white ashes, decorated with ostrich feathers and strange head-gears and shaking beautifully-made large-

headed spears, yelling, stamping and dancing with fearful energy. The Shilluks, by the way, call themselves a nation and not a tribe. They are magnificent fighting men, and both they and their women are extremely moral and well-behaved. Our black Sudanese battalions (9th to 15th) are (or were) largely recruited from them.

We now entered the vast Sudd region of swamp vegetation, and the insects were simply diabolical. We had borne with the *serût-fly*—a beast of the size of a large house-fly and armed with a lancet-like proboscis of hard material which he jabs into you, right through your clothes, at unexpected moments. Yet we bore with him because he was not poisonous. But here, directly the sun set, the air was alive with untold numbers of insects, who either crawled all over you or immolated themselves by thousands in the candles or your soup. And if you felt an extra large one crawling over the back of your neck and struck at it, you would find that you had squashed a bloated sort of wingless grasshopper, and that the resulting mess on your neck and collar was most unpleasant. Ordinary mosquitoes were there, of course, and millions of them; but the worst of them was a bright scarlet one with a most venomous bite, and wherever she had been drawing a meal from you, your flesh rose up in painful white lumps. It was always a marvel to me how these little pests lived when there were no steamers or people about; for the only live things in the Sudd were crocodiles and hippos, whose skin, one would think, would be fairly difficult to penetrate.

At Shambe, by the way, I counted seventy-two hippos in one pool. I do not know whether they are still regarded as vermin in the Sudan and excluded from the game laws; but they ought to be, for they are not only dangerous beasts to encounter, but they do an enormous amount of damage to the native crops. The bulls often go for native canoes

and upset them—we once lost a whole Bahr el Ghazal mail and several rifles from this cause—and many Shilluks, who spear them from canoes, have lost their lives in consequence. An Egyptian soldier, too, bathing in shallow water, was charged by an entirely unprovoked hippo, who bit off his leg above the knee; and Slatin himself was once pursued by one on land—they run much faster than you would think—and had to take refuge in a friendly tree.

By dint of careful navigation—for the river was then at its lowest—we reached Lado, then the headquarters of the Belgian 'Lado Enclave,'<sup>1</sup> and went ashore here. The Belgian officers (mostly Swedes and Danes, by the way) received us kindly, and we made the acquaintance of the native Congolese troops. At that time none of the garrison could go farther than half a mile or so outside Lado, for the tribes in the vicinity had been roused to righteous wrath by the ravages of the Congolese troops and murdered any of them they could catch. The tribes on the opposite bank of the Nile, on the other hand, being in Sudanese territory, were peaceful and thriving under our administration, and many transfers took place in consequence from the western to the eastern bank.

In spite of the sandbanks we just managed to reach Gondókoro, the northernmost Uganda post, and were not favourably impressed with what we saw. At Mongalla, on the other hand, our southernmost post, although the officer in charge, not knowing that we were coming, was away in another part of his province, everything was spick and span. With only a black officer left in charge, the guard and troops turned out smartly to welcome us; station and huts were scrupulously clean, people looked happy and contented, and all was in first-rate order.

A few miles below this, at a sharp turn of the

<sup>1</sup> Since handed over to the Sudan at King Leopold's death.

river, we suddenly came on a charming sight—four huge elephants, remarkably black of skin and white of tusk, and each with a snow-white egret sitting on his head. On seeing us they threw up their trunks and shambled away into the bush; but as we had no game permits and time was short, we could not pursue them. On the other, eastern, bank we also saw some tall lamp-posts in the distance, which moved off through the smoke of the burning grass as we watched—giraffes; and in the reeds and on the drier parts were plenty of water-buck, hartebeest, dig-dig and many other sorts of game—but never a lion did we see or hear.

Our delightful trip came to an end all too soon; and although the Lord and his party continued their journey to Cairo, I remained up at Khartoum for several more weeks. Then another hot summer in Cairo, broken by cool week-ends at Alexandria in the huge San Stefano hotel and in bathes in the translucent pale-blue sea; and then—I suddenly received a telegram from home saying that the King would like me to go as Military Attaché to Berlin, and hoped I would not refuse. This was, of course, tantamount to an order; and though I loved my work in Egypt and the Sudan, and had hoped for another year or two of it, I naturally accepted, and in September I left the shores of Egypt for good. King Edward had suggested that I should be out in Germany for the Emperor's manœuvres; but as this would have given me barely time to get home and get to Berlin, and I knew what eye-wash the Kaisermanöver were, and as I was particularly keen to finish an official book on the Sudan which I was writing against time (and generally past midnight), His Majesty was graciously pleased to fall in with my suggestion.

On arriving in England the King called me to Balmoral, and there gave me instructions as to many things. I was also given a brevet Lieutenant-

Colonelcy. Dear old General Kelly-Kenny, then Adjutant-General, was at Balmoral at this juncture, and he confided to me his doubts as to whether I had done anything to deserve a brevet and whether he ought to gazette it. But I pacified him by pointing out that I had never received any recognition for my most valuable services in connection with the Sudan and Egypt—nearly four years out there altogether, including two campaigns, besides much Sudan work in the Intelligence Division at home—and he gave in with a sigh.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## BERLIN.

AND now I found myself in a very different atmosphere to that of comfortable old Cairo, where everybody knew everybody else and was on the warmest of terms with every other member of the happy family so despotically and benevolently ruled over by 'the Lord.' Here it was a case of bowing and heel-clicking, of a stiff and 'correct' attitude, of an artificial atmosphere impregnated with a jealous and suspicious Court nominally and outwardly adrant of and obeisant to the Emperor in all things, but inwardly a mass of intriguing, back-biting courtiers, each struggling for position at the expense of his neighbour, and, with a few honourable exceptions, none too particular as to the stories that they whispered into the ear of the All-Highest (when they could get at him), or as to those that they told about His Majesty to other people.

Just before I left London von S——, the German Military Attaché, a very nice fellow, had come to see me and give me some valuable advice. "Whatever military information you want," said he, "ask for it from the General Staff. If they can give it you they will; and if they can't they will tell you they can't. But in the latter case don't try and get the information by spying, or bribery, or anything of that sort; for the General Staff will be sure to hear of it, and, even if they don't ask for

your removal, they will see that you get no further information of any sort."

Well, this was fair and square dealing, and I appreciated it and worked accordingly. These were also evidently the instructions given to their own Military Attachés abroad, for, many years later, the German Military Attaché in London handed to me, much to my surprise, a letter he had received from an Englishman offering to sell him information, and asked me to deal with it (which we did most successfully, by the way, and caught the blackguard). But I am doubtful whether the German General Staff played quite fair with me. For I also received a letter from a German offering to sell me the plans of certain sea-forts; and from certain indications I am pretty sure it was a 'put-up' job. But they did not get much change out of it, for I merely wrote the 'traitor' a letter telling him how disgraceful it was to try and sell his country, and that if he wrote again I should report him to the authorities; and I heard no more. (But, of course, I passed on his letter to our own General Staff.)

S—— also gave me a brief description of the various military authorities I should have to deal with. I found it very accurate—more especially the portion which referred to a certain well-known General, high in favour with the Kaiser, as "er ist falsch wie die Nacht"! I certainly found him so, for on the few occasions on which I had to correspond with him, he was most unnecessarily affectionate in his letters to me; and I subsequently found he had been traducing me to the Emperor. This was the General who was held in so little respect by the Army that they put about a story that his staff, in despair at his stupidity in the field, were getting up a subscription to buy and present him with 'der kluge Hans.' This was a wonderful Russian stallion then all the rage in Berlin; for he



did sums, answered questions, told the time and did other marvellous things by rapping out the answers with his hoof according to a code his master had taught him. He belonged to a certain Herr von Schilling, who was rather chary of showing him—and made no money over it—for the performance only took place in his backyard and to a few selected spectators. I have not the least idea how it was done; for I took the opportunity of asking Hans the correct time by my watch *when his master was standing behind him and away from him and talking to someone else*; and he answered quite correctly—though he tried to bite me at the same time.

Dear old Sir Frank Lascelles was our Ambassador in those days, and the Embassy—with his sister Lady Edward Cavendish or his daughter (who subsequently married Spring-Rice) as hostess—was always most hospitable to me. When I first arrived, George Buchanan (our Ambassador in Petrograd during the war) was Councillor, but he was shortly transferred to Sofia, and J. B. Whitehead took his place. In the Chancery during most of my time—a cheery crowd—were Theo Russell,<sup>1</sup> Granville,<sup>2</sup> Horace Rumbold,<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Robertson,<sup>4</sup> Allenby (Naval Attaché), Wingfield,<sup>5</sup> Bentinck<sup>6</sup> and Gaskell (Commercial Attaché), and that amusing but most irresponsible of Honorary Attachés—Pat de Bathe. And as we were most of us bachelors at that time we used to amuse ourselves considerably from a social point of view—both when the ‘season’ was on and at other times of the year.

The ‘season’ in Berlin only lasted for two months—January and February. Curiously enough, hardly

<sup>1</sup> Now our Minister at The Hague.

<sup>2</sup> Now our Ambassador at Brussels.

<sup>3</sup> Now our Ambassador in Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> Late Ambassador at Buenos Aires.

<sup>5</sup> Now Minister in Siam.

<sup>6</sup> Now Minister in Peru.

any of the 'Upper Ten' had houses in Berlin—the only ones that I can remember as house-owners, besides the high officials and those of Hebraic descent, being the Henckel Donnersmarcks and the Rederns. You had to be a millionaire in those days to be able to afford a town house; for the Municipality of Berlin was strongly Social-Democratic, and purposely charged enormous rates and taxes in the 'society' quarter of the town. Consequently during the season there was a big influx of people from their country houses into hotels or flats taken for two months only. And by the middle of March they had all disappeared. But they made the most of it, for during January and February there was hardly a night free of big dinners or dances or entertainments of all sorts. And the Court also distributed icy and dignified hospitality.

First of all there was the 'Gratulirungs-Cour' on the 1st January, when all the bigger people and diplomatic heads came to wish the Emperor a happy New Year. Then the 'Militär-Cour,' the same thing from a military point of view, but not including foreigners. Then the 'Schleppen-Cour' or (Ladies') Train Court, corresponding more or less to the British 'Court,' but much smaller, for the ordinary gentry were not admitted to such high functions. For this performance the Emperor stood, in resplendent white Garde-du-Corps uniform, with silver-gilt helmet, in a sort of glorified sentry-box all hung with electric lights. He posed in an extremely Imperial attitude, and vouchsafed not a glance nor a movement in the direction of the people bowing and curtsying in front of him. The Empress was also there, but she did not share the illuminated glory of her spouse. The whole show, from start to finish, did not last for more than half an hour. Then there were two Court balls, also rather stiff affairs, for there were strict rules about dancing, most of which I forget, and things were largely

regulated by a body of Vortänzer—a number of officers selected for their dancing or ceremonious qualities, with complicated duties telling people what to do or what not to do, so that the best thing for the new-comer who arrived with ideas of amusing him or herself was not to try and dance at all.

But the *mise-en-scène* in the Weisse Saal—the great dancing-hall with white marble pillars and gold and white walls—was, I must say, magnificent. And the suppers were quite excellent, all sit-down suppers with plenty of time and extremely good food and drink, though, as far as I remember, you were not allowed to take in the lady of your choice, but had one told off to you—which was sometimes not quite the same thing.

There was one excellent ball, a fancy dress one, given by the American Ambassador, where everyone had taken much trouble with their dresses, and consequently it was a great success. (I went as an Abyssinian Ras, lion's mane, sword, shield and all, but found my dress, including bare brown feet, rather difficult to dance in!) The Empress heard of it, and after a few days commanded twenty-five young couples to come in their dresses and dance at the Schloss. They came; but when they went into supper—so one of the girls told me afterwards—they were not allowed to go in arm-in-arm, as that was considered improper amongst young people. My friend happened to be extremely tired, for she had been dancing for six nights running; and after the first dance (she had an English mother, so that may account for it) she slipped behind a curtain in a window recess and sat there to rest, as she thought, for the remainder of the evening. Not a bit of it! Her absence was soon discovered, and the Empress commanded that all dancing should cease until she was found. Aides-de-camp and servants hunted busily about, and before long, of course, she was discovered behind her curtain, hauled before the

Empress, wiggled by her and made to dance again. So much for venturing to call your soul your own in an Imperial palace! Or even in an Imperial town, for one day, when bicycling in the Tiergarten, Miss Lascelles came face to face with the Emperor; and hardly had she returned home when an Imperial message was delivered at the Embassy saying that Miss Lascelles was not to bicycle in future, as His Majesty did not approve of ladies riding bicycles. You can imagine the lady's fury!

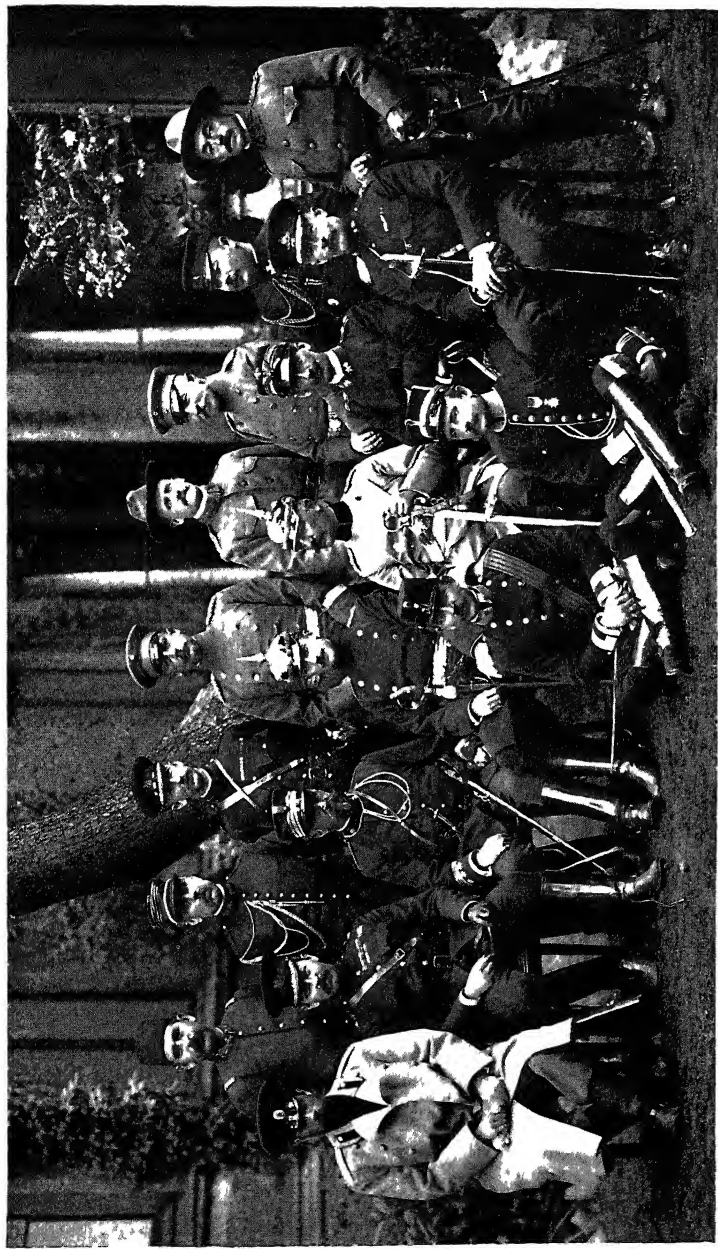
My half-English friend also confided to me that when girls were driving down the Unter den Linden, even when accompanied by their mothers, they were always obliged by order to keep their eyes firmly fixed on their own toes, so as not by chance to encounter the possibly amorous glances of one of the numerous Herr-Leutnants for ever swaggering up and down this thoroughfare. And I remember that once, when Ernst Günther (of Holstein), the Empress' own brother, was taken ill in an hotel in Berlin, and his (and her) younger sister Feo came up from Potsdam to stay with him and nurse him, she was at once sent back by the Empress with a curt message that it was most improper for an unmarried girl to stay with her brother in a public hotel!

It has always seemed to me that this over-prudish attitude on the part not only of the All-Highest couple, but of most of the elderly females of Berlin as well, was likely to defeat its own ends by suggesting to the girls' minds subjects and possibilities which would never occur at all to the ordinary nice clean-minded girl. And that this was so is, I think, fairly well proved by the numerous stories told and high kick-ups that used to occur in the households of some of the young (and sometimes lovely) married women in Berlin. But that sort of thing is not in my province; let us turn to cleaner things.

My own 'chers collègues'—*i.e.*, the other Military

Attachés—were, I thought, a particularly nice lot. What astonished me at first was that Saxony, Bavaria and Württemberg had Military Attachés in Berlin. It was dependent, of course, on the fact that these three kingdoms have military budgets separate from the Prussian one (which governs the rest of Germany's military expenditure). But the main thing about the three, for me, was that they were pleasant companions—von Salza, von Geb-sattel and von Dorrer. My best friend among the remainder was the Frenchman, the Marquis de Laguiche, who, besides, had a most charming and witty wife, very intelligent and well-informed, but unfortunately an invalid. They had just been transferred from Vienna, and were later to occupy the same position at St Petersburg; and as Madame de Laguiche kept up a voluminous correspondence with her numerous friends in all three capitals, there was little that went on in Europe that she did not know. After I left Berlin I used to keep up a spas-modic correspondence with her, and her letters were always a source of joy to me, so full of material, such delightful expression and so amusing. Alas! the poor lady is no more.

Shebeko, the Russian, was rather saturnine, not in the best of health and rather retiring; but a nice fellow. The Spanish doyen of the Military Attachés, Count Peñon de la Vega, was a good old thing who had been in Berlin for fourteen years; whilst the Austrian, Klepsch-Kloth von Roden, was a charming fellow, with an equally charming wife. On one occasion, just before some military display before the Emperor to which we were all invited, Klepsch received an abrupt notification from the Court that his presence there would not be welcome. Klepsch was in a great state of mind. He cudgelled his brains trying to recall any incident which might have brought him into disfavour, or anything political in Austria at which His Majesty might have taken



# MILITARY ATTACHÉS AT KAISERMANOVER, 1904

Nazif Bey, L'ignuche, Agnew (invited), v. Salza, Biddle, v. Dorra, Kikutaro Oi Smiley (invited),  
 Shebeko, Self, De I y Vega, v. Muller and v. Loen ("beat-leaders"), Gristaldello, Trench (invited),  
 Klepsch v Roden, I ie



offence. But his Ambassador reassured him as to that. So he spent a miserable day whilst we were away. And then it came out. It had been reported to the Emperor that one of Klepsch's children had the measles, and the All-Highest was afraid of infection—even in the open air.

Kikutaro Oi, the sturdy little Japanese Colonel, always reminded me of Humpty Dumpty in 'Alice'—he was just that shape. He was quite friendly, but very reserved. If, however, I wanted information about certain things, such as mobilisation and classes, which was not procurable from the General Staff, he would generally tell me what I wanted to know. He had, I found, a regular intelligence service of his countrymen, sometimes Japanese officers openly attached to German troops, sometimes 'civilians,' at most of the important military centres; and he was consequently most knowledgeable. But he was difficult, like most Japanese, to get to know well. Like H. D., he had a hard shell.

Biddle of the U.S.A. was a nice modest little man, generally suffering from Philippine malaria, and not at all the type one might expect. But he knew a good deal, and worked hard. As his foreign languages were somewhat 'thin,' he and I used to combine in some things, and we did several trips together to Essen and elsewhere. The Turk (Nazif Bey), the Italian (Gastaldello) and the Norwegian (Lie), of whom I knew but little, complete the gallery. There were no Danes or Swedes nor South Americans whilst I was in Berlin—why, I know not.

I cannot say that the work was very excessive. There were, of course, a good many conundrums sent me by our General Staff to be answered—and some of them took a good deal of answering. Official correspondence with the German General Staff was always a trouble, for although I knew German well, one's letters had to be couched in a stiff official style, dating, I should think, from Frederick the



Great. The usual formula began: "To your High-Well-born honours himself the undersigned most devotedly to communicate," &c., and the signing alone occupied two or three lines; whilst the material in the middle had to be partly in the third person, with occasional indirect compliments or humility. It was as bad as, I should think, the Turkish flowery official correspondence that one hears of. And one could not just 'drop in' on the General Staff, as foreign Military Attachés in London were wont to do with us, and settle complicated questions by a few minutes' talk. No, personal interviews were discouraged, and if one insisted, one had to make an appointment by letter; and even then it was not very satisfactory, for the officer one interviewed was always on his stiffest and most official behaviour, and one got little out of him. But there was generally something on the tapis to write home about, some new regulation or invention or development or movement of troops; and the war in South-west Africa was then going on, so that I had no real difficulty in keeping up my self-imposed average of one despatch a week, whether I was in Berlin or away, on leave in England or elsewhere.

Concerning the campaign against the Héreros in 'German South-West,' I shall not easily forget the storm of fury that arose when a seriously 'regrettable incident' occurred out there: the defeat and massacre of a detachment under a Major von Glasenapp. The idea that German soldiers could ever be defeated was so totally foreign to their countrymen—and defeated by a handful of 'niggers'! Good heavens! the idea was preposterous, unthinkable, impossible! The newspapers poured forth their buckets of wrath on poor Glasenapp, who, unfortunately for himself, had not been killed, and the country yelled for revenge. Revenge they certainly got, for the German troops eventually, but with considerable difficulty, drove most of the

Héleros—a fine fighting tribe which had been driven to desperation by German ‘administration’—into the desert, where most of them, with their families, perished of thirst; and sent the remainder of the tribe, when they had surrendered, to an island off the coast where, if report be true, they omitted to supply them with the requisite food. In any case the Héleros ceased to exist as a tribe.

The Russo-Japanese War was also going on at the time, and to this I need only refer in saying that the universal opinion in Berlin was that Russia would not have the smallest difficulty in crushing her irritating little enemy; and they were much surprised at the result (foretold by us), though quite ready to take advantage of it.

There were, of course, numerous reviews and parades and military ceremonies of all sorts that we Military Attachés attended, at most of which the Emperor was the chief figure; and one slight difficulty at most of them was to know what uniform exactly to wear. There were in those days only three, or practically three, ‘orders’ of dress for the British officer: ‘full-dress’ (tunic) and ‘undress’ (blue frockcoat), with either pantaloons or trousers according to whether you were riding or not, and ‘mess-dress.’ But the Germans had five or six different ‘orders,’ including ‘undress with helmet’ and varieties with or without epaulettes, and they had no mess-dress, and consequently I could but rarely conform exactly. One had to think out the proportional importance of the function and do one’s best. On one occasion I got into terribly hot water with the Emperor, for, being bidden to dine privately at the castle when Prince Arthur was over on a visit to the 3rd Red Hussars, I thought mess-dress, being a very smart kit and rarely seen in Berlin, would exactly suit the occasion. But the Kaiser thought otherwise—and let me know it.

During most of my time in Berlin relations were

somewhat strained between Great Britain and Germany. I will not go into the details, which are to be found in many other volumes of reminiscences, notably Baron Eckhardstein's, further than to say that it was the Emperor's and Tirpitz's insane ambition to build a huge navy that was at the bottom of the mischief, and that the natural expansion of a great and powerful country, not renowned for tact or delicacy of feeling, was bound to create small jealousies and suspicions in many directions. The situation reacted, of course, in many ways, and amongst others upon my humble self as representing the British Army. Without being the object of actual rudeness on the part of the German officers, I could not help feeling a want of the normal camaraderie which should exist between officers of different armies. I remember, for instance, that when we were all riding out for some parade to the Tempelhofer Feld, I rode up to an officer that I knew very well—quite a good fellow off parade—and began talking to him; and his efforts to shake me off, so as not to be seen talking in public to an Englishman, were quite pathetic and even ludicrous, for I pretended not to notice anything and persisted in riding alongside him. Again, although I knew a large number of officers in the Guards regiments, I was very rarely indeed (only twice I think) asked to a meal with them, and then most of them stood away and left my host and myself alone. It may also partly have been because the Kaiser's attitude to me was not of the warmest, and they wished to follow suit.

I do not know why the Emperor disliked me; I think it must have been because I twice ventured to suggest that I did not agree with him. The first time was when I made my first official bow to him on arrival. He received me at the Neues Palais in Potsdam, and walked me up and down the garden, talking rapidly (in English) about the British Army,

and evidently (though hardly in so many words) hinting what fools he thought us for doing, or not doing, this or that. And then he burst out about our having a civilian War Minister (Mr Arnold-Forster was then Secretary of State for War), and said it was perfectly ridiculous; nobody but a soldier could be of any use at the head of an army. He became so vehement on this subject that I am afraid I smiled, discreetly, I thought, but I suppose I was wrong; and when he paused for breath I told him that with our Parliamentary system, &c., &c., it was necessary; and, after all, I thought the British Army had not done so badly on the whole with civilian War Ministers, and I smiled again. He did *not* smile.

Then a few months later, when a particularly venomous article about him had appeared in the 'National Review,' he complained about this (I think he was dining at the Embassy) in unmeasured terms and said to me, "You know that man, Maxse, he's a German subject by birth; he was born in Heligoland when his father was Governor there, and he's now abusing me like this!" I was a little taken aback by this remark, for, as I told the Kaiser, I knew Leo Maxse quite well, and knew his father also, and that the latter had never been Governor of Heligoland. Also, I added, I did not quite see how, even if his father had been Governor, this would make Leo Maxse a German subject, as the island was then a British possession. The Emperor only snorted and turned his back on me, so I suppose I had offended again.

But a much worse offence than this was what happened in June 1904, when King Edward came over to Kiel in the *Victoria and Albert* in order to try to smoothe over small matters of dispute with the charm of his presence.

It was part of my business to keep abreast with German military literature, and I had come across

a book written partly in English and partly in German, with the English title 'The Military Interpreter,' by one Jecklin, an officer in one of the Guards regiments. It was a sort of handbook of English and German military terms, with set exercises for translating from one language to the other. One of the exercises was an account of how the British had murdered the Boer wounded in South Africa and sent the Boer women-folk to starve in horrible concentration camps, with elaborate and beastly details to scale, and another exercise was a proclamation of the Kaiser when he had entered London at the head of a victorious army—also most offensive. There were others too, but not so bad.

As was my duty, I sent a copy of this home to the Intelligence Division for information—nothing more. As it happened, General Grierson showed it to Mr Arnold-Forster, who, treating the matter much more seriously than it deserved, showed it to the King. So when all the festivities at Kiel, which lasted for a week, were over and matters had been smoothed over, and both sides were feeling more friendly, King Edward pulled the book out of his pocket and said laughingly to the Emperor: "This is a nice sort of thing that your officers publish—and you pretend that your country wants to be so friendly with England. What humbugs you must be!" All this said in the most friendly chaff. But the Emperor was not at all in the mood for chaff; he took it very seriously indeed and was furious—with *me*! Though he never spoke to me about it afterwards personally, he said I had done a most outrageous and unfriendly thing in sending the book home to the King, and said that I ought to have come to him about it at once, and he would have stopped it; and here he was, having just made friends with England, and I had spoilt it all again. Meanwhile he transferred the author of all the trouble to a distant garrison. As for me, I had to go and explain

the whole thing to the Chancellor, Prince Bülow, and gave him my word of honour that I had *not* sent the book personally to the King, and that the idea of his seeing it had never even crossed my mind. But the Emperor, as I heard later, refused to believe me, and insisted that I had sent it to the King with evil intent. Consequently our relations were thenceforward none of the most friendly. I felt so strongly about it—having my word of honour disbelieved—that I wanted to refuse attendance at the Kaisermanöver; but King Edward would not hear of it.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

BERLIN—*continued*.

‘KAISERMANÖVER’—Imperial Manœuvres—so-called because the Emperor was present, were, of course, the big *pièce de résistance*, the culminating aspect, from a military point of view, of the year. But they were, in reality, not half so important as they looked. True, they involved the movements of a huge mass of men, and they gave opportunities for the higher commands to gain experience in the moving and supply of great bodies of men—a corps or more on either side, though not made up to war strength. But the whole thing was largely spectacular, and a good deal of ‘eye-wash’ went to the composing of it. A certain number of new things were produced at these manœuvres, but these were only things which could be shown to anyone—no secrets in them. The really important manœuvres were those of much smaller bodies, say brigades or even regiments or less, which had already taken place in out-of-the-way districts, unheralded in the Press and strictly taboo to the Military Attachés. At these, new ideas and exercises in tactics, staff work, communications, railway and transport work, movements of heavy artillery, development of machine-guns, &c., took place, and were kept as quiet as possible.

I have already described the manœuvres of 1888 from the personal point of one who actually took

part in them, so it is unnecessary to say much of the detail of these later ones of 1904 and 1905. But, low be it spoken, I was not very much impressed by them. The marching of the infantry was magnificent, and so was the staff work; but in spite of all the development of thought and the reams of paper covered on the subject of the attack, I did not think there was much improvement on that of 1888: very poor use of cover, mass attacks which would have been mown down by modern machine-guns, little attention paid to the moral side, mechanical drill-book work, want of intelligence on the part of the men, everything subordinated to the idea of crushing the enemy by the main force of huge masses, irrespective of possible losses. The guns exposed themselves ridiculously, no indirect fire, and the cavalry reconnaissance work and horsemanship were poor; but then the German idea is different from ours, for we train our cavalry to be horsemen on imperfectly-trained horses, whilst theirs are just soldiers on wonderfully-trained mounts. Above all, neither men nor subordinate officers seemed to take much personal interest—they were bored and stale, and only longing for the whole thing to be over, when the officers would get a bit of leave and a third of the men be discharged to civilian life. And, of course, the military positions and movements had to be largely arranged so as not to interfere with the supply bases and stations for final entraining; so that impossible situations were bound to arise, calling for strenuous staff work on the part of the higher directing authorities.

This sort of thing is bound to happen in all big peace manœuvres; but although I have seen manœuvres in several countries—England, Ireland, France, Germany, Sweden and even Montenegro—these Kaisermanöver always gave me the impression of make-believe more than those of any other army. Especially as a big cavalry charge had always



to be engineered with, if possible, the Emperor at its head.

But the organisation and detail of orders were beyond all praise, and the control of the Military Attachés very strict. We were bear-led in a crowd by two Staff officers, and when one of us managed to escape for half an hour and see what he wanted, it was almost pathetic to meet on his return the reproachful gaze and delicately-worded protests of those in charge of us. But in the way of quarters and food we were very well 'done,' and a fleet of special motor-cars rushed us always to the required point at the required moment. One's leisure hours, by the way, were mostly occupied by the necessity of leaving cards on all and sundry, and even of travelling some distance in order to conform with this somewhat unnecessary rite. But the whole outing, which lasted the best part of a week, was, though not very instructive, quite pleasant, and brought one into touch with many people whom otherwise one would not have encountered.

There were also other things of military interest besides the numerous ceremonial parades and reviews that one had to attend at Potsdam or on the huge Tempelhofer Feld at Berlin—mostly graced by the All-Highest War Lord at the head of a large and brilliant staff. We were, for instance, bidden to occasional trials of new artillery—light howitzers and the like—or were taken over some of the numerous military establishments, such as the Kriegs-Akademie (Staff College—a poor place compared with ours) and Kadetten-Anstalt, or over some of the barracks. But we also did some sight-seeing 'on our own,' though we had to get special and official leave for several of our visits. Biddle and I went over the vast Krupp works at Essen, and were graciously shown many things by the directors, who kindly refused to allow us to pay our hotel bills at the Krupp Hotel; and we also visited the rival establishment

(in a smaller way) of Ehrhardt. The Physical Laboratory near Potsdam was also of much interest, and here we were shown how to make frozen air, how to photograph bullets being shot through different substances and how to distinguish metals microscopically. But the trip I liked best was one I made with Laguiche to the Government studs at Insterburg and other places in East Prussia.

There was always a demand for British stallions in order to breed bone and stamina in these Prussian horses; for the soil of these parts was very light and wanting in lime. Consequently not only was the forage very poor (according to English ideas), but the horses, though nice enough to look at, were sadly wanting in solidity; and we were told that the English horses likewise deteriorated here after a year or two. But the management and training of the youngsters was, I thought, admirable; and I was particularly struck with the docility and friendliness of all the horses. In England, if you walk into the loose-box of an unknown and hefty corn-fed stallion, you are as likely as not to get your brains kicked out, or at all events be crippled for life. But here you could walk into any stallion's box without an introduction, and you would be received with a friendly whinny and nuzzle of your shoulder. The mares and foals were kept together in large covered enclosures deep in tan, in parties of thirty or forty; and when you came in they would all show the friendliest interest in you and come up to be stroked and patted. Which all shows that the animals were treated with the greatest tact and kindness. They keep them and train them much longer than we should, and do not send them to the troop until, as far as I remember, the sixth year; and by then they are thoroughly trained and obedient—no bobbery horses for the German cavalry! I remember indeed at one big Kaiser-parade that one of the mounted officers at the

march-past was riding, and riding very well, a hot, good-looking, little chestnut mare—his own property; and at the supreme moment she stood on her hind-legs and whisked round—without, however, unseating her rider. I subsequently expressed my admiration for the mare and her owner to an A.D.C. of the Emperor's; but he looked horrified at my remarks, and told me that the Emperor had sent for the unfortunate officer and given him a severe wiggling—and he would probably receive a 'blauer Brief' (blue letter—possibly the loss of his commission) over it. So much for different points of view.

About this time I got myself into hot water with the authorities. For, seeing that, as noted above, Saxony, Bavaria and Württemberg were military entities separate from Prussia, I conceived it to be my duty to go and pay them my respects as Military Attaché; and after discussion with the Ambassador—who saw no objection, but considered that it would be rather a good thing—I obtained his permission and went. I did not consult the Prussian authorities, as I imagined that they had no say in the matter.

Everything went smoothly. I was presented by our Ministers at Dresden and Munich, and though the King of Saxony happened to be away, I was well received by the chief of his War Office, and, when I got to Munich, was still more warmly received by the dear old Regent and his military chiefs. His Royal Highness kindly asked me to luncheon, and we spent a happy hour over very large cigars, discussing the merits of chamois and wild-boar shooting, in his smoking-room (all hung with the trophies of his rifle) afterwards. I think both Saxons and Bavarians were pleased at the idea of having a real foreign Military Attaché accredited to them, for it emphasised their military separation from Prussia—whom, of course, they loathed. Before going on to Stuttgart, however, I had to return to Berlin for some function or other, and was received with

very black looks. I had apparently committed a fearful crime, for which there was no precedent; and discovered that a strong letter of protest had been despatched to Sir Frank Lascelles on the subject of my enormity. It was no good opening an acrimonious argument on the subject of how far my individual rights as Military Attaché extended; so the subject was dropped—and so was my projected visit to Stuttgart.

Meanwhile I was lucky in getting asked to a good many shoots in different parts of Germany. They were fairly various. One was a capercailzie-shoot<sup>1</sup> in Coburg, in the spring, in the breeding season. This sounds perfectly brutal, but as a matter of fact it is the only possible way of keeping down the number of cocks in the great forests which swarm with this game; for the ground is quite impossible to drive in the ordinary way, and you would never get a shot if you wandered about in these huge and craggy woods: the birds would be off long before you could get your gun off. But it is really a most exciting sport, and, in my humble opinion, is more than equal to deer-stalking.

You climb out of bed about 2 A.M. and are driven for miles into the hills, so that you arrive on the ground an hour or so before sunrise. Then you listen with all your ears, and if you are lucky you hear a cock calling in the distance. Now the gist of the whole thing is this: that when a cock calls—either to a hen or to his rival ('balzen' it is called in German)—he crows for a bit and then guggles for five or six seconds; and whilst he is guggling he is *stone-deaf*. By an odd provision of nature the guggling action draws a sort of horny shield, internally, over his ears, and he can then hear *nothing*—not even a gun being fired close by. So you move as silently as you can towards him, and when you get within two or three hundred yards (for his

<sup>1</sup> 'Auerhahn-balz' in German.

hearing is very sharp at normal times) you stop and wait for him to 'balz.' And the moment he starts to guggle you rush forward at top speed. But at the very instant that he stops you must stop too—even if you have one leg in the air, for the crackle of a twig or chink on a stone would be fatal. This rush may have to be repeated half a dozen times before you are near enough to shoot; but woe betide you if you make the smallest noise between the guggles—he is off like a shot before you are within gun-range.<sup>1</sup>

Imagine that you have got within twenty or thirty yards of the fir-tree in the thick topmost branches of which he is calling. If you can see him—shoot; but if you cannot, you will have to creep right up to the tree, and even then you often cannot see him, for branches are in the way. It is frightfully exciting, especially with lots of little twigs or stones about; and if he hears you and suddenly swoops silently away, he is always careful to keep the tree between himself and you.

The actual shot—as long as you can see him properly—is, of course, nothing at such close quarters. But to hear a heavy 'whump' on the ground following the bang, and to pick up the great bird, the size of a turkey and gleaming with a sheen of bronze, green, blue and black, is full recompense for many an exciting hour. And you cannot kill more than two in a morning, for you cannot carry them.

On another occasion, when staying with my cousin Victor (Duke of) Ratibor, at Rauden, in Silesia, we had a couple of days in the woods, with a resultant bag of roedeer and hares. The beaters, as we were close on the Polish frontier, were all Poles; and never did I see more miserable specimens of humanity. They—both men and women—were literally in rags, stunted, hideous and looking hardly human, with a

<sup>1</sup> You have to use a scatter-gun and not a rifle, because of the branches.

furtive, hunted look in their eyes and no gleam of intelligence in their faces. They looked like wild people of the woods; and so they were, for most of them lived in huts and shacks in the depths of the forest, with barely enough to eat. The women, poor devils, had especially to be watched; for they wore big hooks inside their ample skirts, and took every hidden opportunity of picking up dead hares and hanging them inside their petticoats. They had the worst of reputations, too, as thieves and criminals. If this type had been truly representative of the majority of the Poles, I am not surprised that the Germans should have both hated and despised them as a nation.

On the third day of my stay we were bidden to a big partridge-drive. Twelve guns we were, lined out in a string of butts at the bottom of a shallow valley, and here we stayed all day. The birds in the surrounding country had been driven in for forty-eight hours previously, and there were an immense quantity of them about. There were also two parties of beaters, so the procedure was consequently simple; and I must say it was very good fun, for after the first beat the birds came from all angles and at all heights. I think I must have been shooting fairly well, for after a time I found myself selecting the highest and most difficult birds. Anyhow, the bag amounted to just under 1000 birds, of which my cousin got 210, for he was a first-rate shot (besides being President of the German Jagd-verein).

Although I did not personally get a shot at a woodstag during my three years' stay, I had ample evidence of their size, for there was an exhibition held in Berlin of the biggest heads of the year—with prizes for the finest—and some of the heads were colossal: eighteen to twenty points were far from uncommon, and the beam was sometimes of terrific thickness and the spread immense, making the best

of our Scottish heads look tiny by comparison. But of course with the respective feeds and country there could be no comparison. And although most of the stags are got by fair stalking, at some places—such as Rominten, the Emperor's shooting-box—the deer and other game are driven past the most important guests at such a short range that there is no sport or skill in the matter.

The general idea of German sport seemed to me—to put it shortly—more murderous than ours, for it gives the game fewer chances. For instance, I had a day or two's wild-boar shooting down south, and though my host was a thorough sportsman in every other respect, in one instance I did not like his views. For, wishing to give me a good chance at the pig, he placed me opposite a narrow hole in a wooden fence, so that I could shoot them as they struggled through. He told me I ought to get at least four or five at this place, for two or three at a time would try to jam through and it would be great fun. And he was really seriously annoyed with me afterwards when he found I had let them get through and get on the gallop before I fired—with only one pig as the result!

The same idea seems to run with regard to their hare-shoots—anyway as far as their so-called 'Kessel-jagd' is concerned. This is carried out by forming the guns (of whom there must be at least ten) and beaters into a huge circle covering several fields and coppices and making them walk inwards towards each other, driving (and shooting) the hares in front of them. Then when the guns get within dangerous range of each other they halt and turn about, whilst the beaters go on and drive the hares out. The result is pandemonium—especially for the poor hares, numbers of whom are to be seen hobbling about wounded and screaming till put out of their misery by stick or gun; for everyone is so excited that shooting is by no means accurate.

Hardly a hare escapes. Personally it sickened me ; but, after all, is it much worse than shooting rabbits, with the holes stopped, in a wired-in warren ? or in the ever-dwindling patch of corn in harvest-time ?

At one particular ' Kesseljagd ' I remember, there was a frightfully dangerous shot, the stout Bürgermeister of the neighbouring town. He got terribly excited in the final shoot and loosed off in all directions, eventually peppering a major of the local garrison in the ankle. The major had a most expressive command of language ; and when he had quite finished, the Bürgermeister, who had been standing there with his mouth open—but no apologies issuing therefrom—said : " Why, what a fuss you are making about a little thing ! Last week I shot a duke—and not only a duke but his eldest son too—in the hinterland ; and they didn't make half such a row about it as you are doing ! "

The whole episode, of course, finished in a roar of laughter.

I also went to shoot with my cousin, Ernst Günther (of Schleswig Holstein), at Primkenau, in Silesia ; and there we had regular covert-shooting of pheasants and rabbits—the only place in Germany where I have seen either. And my servant, a Langenburg boy, who had never seen a rabbit before, when he went to pick up a couple that I had slain, asked me, " Aber, Herr Graf, sind denn die Hasen hier nicht furchtbar klein ? " <sup>1</sup>

The only hunting there was to be had was the official ' Kaiserliche Parforce-Jagd ' near Berlin, and I laid in a pink coat for the purpose, as I heard I was likely to be asked to it ; but I never was—I suppose I was not popular enough with the Hohe Herrschaften. It would have been interesting as a spectacle, but hardly as a sport ; for, as I was told, it consisted of hunting a (bagman) wild-boar over heather country, with no jumps ; and the most

<sup>1</sup> " Aren't the hares here awfully small ? "



important principle of it was that the Emperor, if he was present, had to come in first at the death, then the next senior General, and so on down to the junior subaltern; so that I should only have come in about the middle and seen probably nothing.

I was often bidden to Lanke, a country place some twenty miles from Berlin which belonged to Herr Friedländer, a great Jewish coal-mine owner who was rapidly coming to the front. Though necessarily dowered with a thick skin, he was not at all a bad fellow, and, thanks to a pretty and cheerful wife, untold millions and a magnificent house on the Pariserplatz in Berlin, he was quickly making his way into 'Society.' After many failures—for it is hardly necessary to say that Jews were anathema to the 'upper classes' in Berlin<sup>1</sup>—Frau Friedländer had succeeded in getting Sir Frank Lascelles to come to dinner; and this gave the final *cachet* to their social aspirations. Thereafter, especially as other foreign Embassies followed our Ambassador's example, we of the British Embassy were made practically free of both of the Friedländers' houses—even when they were away—and enjoyed ourselves much. One dark episode, however, remains in my mind.

There was a big ballroom in the Pariserplatz house, and Pat de Bathe persuaded Frau Friedländer to let us play lawn-tennis there whilst the family was away. This sounded all right, for the court was already marked out in inlaid woods—but it had never been played on. When, however, we proceeded to play, the floor was so frightfully slippery that we could hardly keep our feet, whilst the balls kept so low and 'shot' so that play was practically impossible. So we got hold of a bag of powdered resin and strewed it generously about, with excel-

<sup>1</sup> I had actually been warned by von S., before going to Berlin, not to make friends with any Jews, and never to accept their invitations.

lent results. But the next time the Friedländers gave a ball there they *could* not make out why so few couples danced, and why people were crabbing their beautiful and expensive floor and calling it sticky. We never told.

Other particularly nice Jewish couples were the Paul Schwabachs (he was our Consul-General there, which seems odd) and the Robbi Mendelssohns, whose musical parties were things to dream of. There was much good music going; Nikitsch was conducting at the big halls, and occasionally celebrated composers would flit across the scene. I remember making the acquaintance of Humperdinck (a curiously odd head he had) and Leoncavallo. The latter had been 'commanded' by the Emperor to write the music for 'Der Roland von Berlin,' a historical play for which His Imperial Majesty was responsible—though I do not think he wrote it all himself. One cannot conceive anything more incongruous than to get an Italian to write the music for a patriotic North German subject—and the performance was a total failure: no one had a good word to say for it. But it was the occasion of a gala performance, at which, of course, all ladies must wear low dresses. Now the fact that it was going to be a gala performance had not been sufficiently advertised, and many of the feminine would-be inhabitants of the upper boxes and galleries consequently arrived, as usual, in high frocks. They were met by stern attendants, who refused to grant them admission in that costume. What were they to do? It will hardly be believed, but many of them actually produced scissors and knives and there and then cut down their frocks, as loyal and dutiful subjects, so as to show their bare shoulders! But the most touching incident was that Leoncavallo had, in imitation of his Imperial master *pro tem.*, trained his own exuberant black moustache straight upwards, finishing in two ferocious points.

Would that I had space to describe the many German plays that I attended! But I can go no further than to say that I was immensely struck with the excellence of the acting—all through; though the casting was not always very adequate, giving, for example, as Puck's representative in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' a large and harshly angular female with a rasping voice, though a good actress (Gertrude Eysoldt). Other plays that stick in my mind are Oscar Wilde's 'Salome' (with Tilly Durieux); Gorki's 'Nachtsyl,' a wonderful performance; 'Johannisfeuer,' 'Sturmgeselle Sokrates' and others of Sudermann's plays; and 'Zapfenstreich,' a terribly popular drama by Beyerlein, the anti-militaristic author of 'Jena oder Sedan?' This latter book—of 700 pages, by the way—was a daring description, with many characters, of the normal (?) life of a garrison town (Pirna in Saxony, as a matter of fact—though no name was given). There were several tragedies in it regarding all ranks from General to private; but the main object was to prove the hollowness of the relations between officers and men, of the terrific discipline which allowed no human feelings to intervene, and, in short, of the entire military system. It gave 'terribly to think,' and was, curious to say, received almost in silence by the Army—for they knew that the strictures, although indirectly conveyed, were true. No one, however, foresaw at that time how true they were going to prove in the final collapse in the Great War, when all military relations between officers and men gave way, first in the naval mutiny and shortly afterwards in the frightful insubordination, during the last period, in the Army.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Several months before the end, at a big Emperor's review near the Front, all troops taking part in it were ordered to come on parade without ammunition—for fear of some unpleasant or even fatal 'accident' happening to those in authority.

There were also, during my period in Berlin, many cases of 'Soldaten-Misshandlungen'—cases of almost unimaginable acts of brutality committed by non-commissioned officers on the private soldiers under their care. German N.C.O.'s have much greater powers—powers of punishment—than in our Army, where such things would consequently be quite impossible. One case, which caused much public scandal, recurs to my mind. It was in a cavalry regiment, where a certain squadron sergeant-major was renowned for his brutality. One day, when in the riding-school, he was shot dead by someone firing through the window. The culprit could not be identified, but a murderer had to be found. So they arrested a man who was known to have been one of the squadron sergeant-major's victims, and, though he proved satisfactorily that he could not have been anywhere near there at the time, he was tried by court-martial and sentenced to death. Discipline had to be satisfied!

(As a matter of fact I never learnt for certain that the sentence had been carried out, and I have reason for believing that it was secretly quashed; but, *pour encourager les autres*, it was given out that he had been shot.)

The great success of 'Jena oder Sedan?' was shortly followed by that of 'Aus einer kleinen Garnison' by one Bilse, a subaltern in the Train (A.S.C.). This was a most scandalous little book, attacking the 'Offizierkorps' and dealing largely with the various love affairs of certain officers' wives—chiefly engendered by the boredom of life in a small garrison town, for in Germany units never change quarters. Though seriously meant, it was quite amusing in parts, and it had a *succès fou*. There was an excellent picture in 'Jugend' on the subject. Scene: the entrance hall of an hotel with a number of officers carrying bundles of papers in their hands

and going up and down stairs. Hotel proprietor to one of them: "Excuse me, Herr Leutnant, could you tell me who the gentleman upstairs is whom all these officers are wanting to see? Is he a great military authority?" "Not at all, my good man. He is Leutnant Bilse's publisher."

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE UNITED STATES.

WHETHER it was that I had got myself seriously disliked by the Emperor or not, I received orders, after I had been three years in Berlin, to proceed to Washington and finish my four years' appointment as Military Attaché in America. That my work in Germany was, however, not looked on as entirely unsuccessful at home was, I am glad to say, proved by King Edward graciously informing me that he was giving me the C.B. And to this he added, in his charming way, a few kindly words such as he used to address to those who have had the good fortune and the honour of giving him satisfaction. I always had the greatest respect and regard and, if I may say so, affection for King Edward. He was a great gentleman; and coming as I did from a Court where its Sovereign was, to say the least of it, very much the reverse, I appreciated his words and his character all the more. One of my most precious treasures is a letter from him in answer to one of mine, in which, sore at heart at the Emperor's pettiness and treatment of me, I had rather unburdened myself to him. His answer was like cool water to a thirsty soul, and gave me a sense of relief beyond expression.

I arrived in Washington on the last day of January 1906. My first experience was a pleasant one; for

on proceeding to the bank on the following morning in search of some American money (my London bankers having sent a draft there to my credit by the ship by which I had come), a courteous elderly clerk, seeing me standing there rather at a loss as to how to proceed, came up to me and said, "Can I do anything for you, sir?" Without giving my name I told him I wanted some money and a cheque-book. "Certainly, sir," and he took me to a cashier and told him to give me a cheque-book. I thereupon wrote out a cheque for a hundred dollars, which the cashier, not even looking at my signature, cashed on the spot! I can only put down this touching mark of confidence in me to the extreme respectability of my appearance. Otherwise it seemed a somewhat rash proceeding on the part of the bank.

In those days Sir Mortimer Durand was our Ambassador and Theodore Roosevelt was President; but I regret that Sir Mortimer's somewhat deliberate manner and caution of procedure were not to the liking of the more active-minded and—shall I say?—slap-dash President; and before I left the country Sir Mortimer had—most unjustly, as many people thought—been recalled in order to please Mr Roosevelt. It was no secret that the President wanted, and expected, Cecil Spring-Rice, a great personal friend of his, to succeed him. But in this he was deeply disappointed, for Lord Bryce was sent in his stead. The fact, however, that I had been best man to 'Springy' in Berlin when he married Miss Lascelles was much in my favour; and when I went to make my bow to the President he was extremely warm in his welcome.

I liked Mr Roosevelt very much—in the few dealings I had with him. One could not help comparing him in one's mind with the Sovereign whose country one had just quitted: the same impulsiveness, the same big personality, the same big ideas and the same determination to enforce them. But

there it ended. With the Emperor the whole world was to centre round himself: *he* was to be in the limelight, *he* was to be the Great Monarch, *he* was to be the Power whom succeeding centuries were to applaud: "*Regis Voluntas suprema Lex*," and his will was to be enforced at all costs. Not so Mr Roosevelt. He had big ideas too, but his own personality did not come into them. Rather did he work with feverish activity to impress those ideas on other people, to get them to work with him, to get his measures carried out by combined effort, to push and shove them through. And having shoved one of them through he would take no credit to himself, but would go ahead with the next idea—entering himself into the matter in all details.

I was much struck with this side of his character when I went to say good-bye to him in the following autumn. He kindly asked me to luncheon at Oyster Bay—a small country house in Long Island absolutely devoid of any pretence. There were half a dozen officials at luncheon, and the President, whilst eating his somewhat frugal meal, dominated the conversation—all about administration or policy matters—asking questions, weighing and discussing the answers, deciding in many cases offhand. And afterwards, as I had an hour or so on my hands, he took me into his study, and I listened with the greatest interest to the work going on—treatment of Indians, Federal *v.* State questions, High Court matters, sanitation, Navy—goodness knows what besides. And then he broke off in order to send a message by me to King Edward—a most undiplomatic method of procedure!—regarding the limitation of European armaments, in the which he anticipated the League of Nations by at least twenty years. Altogether he left me a trifle breathless; and I am not surprised that, living at this rate, his terrific energy eventually wore him out before his time. But I am going ahead too fast.



In the Embassy Chancery at that time were Walter Townley as Councillor, with Ronald Lindsay,<sup>1</sup> E. Rennie<sup>1</sup> and W. Seeds<sup>1</sup> as Secretaries, and Ryan as Naval Attaché. But I had little opportunity at first of making friends with these excellent fellows, for my duties necessitated my paying an early visit to Canada to consult with General Percy Lake<sup>2</sup> there about certain things which affected us both.

When Lord Grey, then Governor-General of Canada, heard that I was coming to Ottawa, he very kindly asked me to come and stay at Government House—the same Rideaux Hall where I had stayed with Lord and Lady Stanley in 1889. Knowing him well, I need hardly say that I accepted with pleasure—for a week, which period he insisted on, though my business with Lake only took three or four days. And when the week was over, he insisted that, as there was no particular work going on in the U.S. Army during the winter, I should stay another week and improve my skating. Accordingly I did so with pleasure; and as all my business letters were to be forwarded to me from Washington, and I could do my work at Ottawa almost as well as in the U.S. capital, I had less compunction in staying yet another week. I am afraid it was nearly a month before I returned!

During that time we celebrated the anniversary of Paardeberg; for the reader will remember that a battalion of Canadians took part in the final fight at that place. I met several of the officers that I had known in South Africa, and we had a very cheery dinner, with songs and most convivial speeches. And in the middle of the conviviality Mr Bonar Law, who was then travelling in Canada and was the

<sup>1</sup> Now respectively Ambassador at Washington, late Minister in Peru and Ambassador in Brazil.

<sup>2</sup> Inspector-General of Canadian Militia, and an old friend from Intelligence Department days; now Lieut.-General Sir P. Lake, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

Governor-General's guest for a night or two, solemnly uprose on his hind-legs and delivered himself of a speech—on Tariff Reform! I need hardly say it fell quite flat. What it is to be a politician!

The house party at Rideaux Hall was a most pleasant one. Besides their Excellencies and their three daughters—of whom Lady Evelyn was a brilliant skater—there were always one or two guests, mostly English on their way through, Forbes-Robertson among others. And of the Staff Gerald Trotter (of the Grenadiers) was an old friend—and a wonderful performer at tennis and other games, though he had left his right arm in South Africa. Newton of the Middlesex was the other A.D.C. (killed later in France), and Sladen was Private Secretary, whilst Leveson-Gower was the musically-inclined Comptroller of the Household. Mr Stephen Leacock was also a frequent visitor: one never knew whether he was going to deliver a serious lecture on Political Economy, or on Egypt, or whether he was going to split your sides with laughter with his amusing conversation and reminiscences.

The weeks at Ottawa passed away very pleasantly—mostly in skating with charming Canadian ladies and in playing tennis in the 'squash-tennis' court already described in a previous chapter. There were, besides, many functions, such as the opening of Parliament (in English and French), 'drawing-rooms,' balls, big dinners and a vast amount of entertainments, both indoors and on the ice. Of these the latter appealed to me most. Figure-skating had, since my last visit of seventeen years before, fallen into disrepute with the Canadians, and ice-hockey had correspondingly increased—largely stimulated by the Stanley Challenge Cup, which had assumed the importance of the Football Association's final trophy in England. But Lord Grey, fond of figure-skating as a spectacle—for he was not a brilliant performer himself—determined

to reintroduce it, and threw himself into the question with his usual energy ; and by giving a Challenge Cup, or rather statuette, and bringing over a professional teacher from Europe and encouraging it to the utmost, he certainly did a great deal towards re-establishing the art.

I left Rideaux Hall with much regret, for I was greatly attached to the Governor-General, whom I had known for many years. He was so keen about everything, enthusiastic as a schoolboy in developing new ideas, especially Imperial ones, and pushing them for all he was worth. And he had such a sense of humour, and was so frankly bored (in private) with the outward state that he had to keep up ; he so longed to be natural. Yet no one could be more dignified than he on official occasions, and his tact and strength in dealing with awkward situations were always a marvel to me. In short, he was personally a most lovable man and, in addition, worthy of the highest respect. No wonder the Canadians adored him.

On my way back to Washington I made my first acquaintance with the U.S. Army in the shape of the 6th Cavalry Regiment, then quartered at Fort Ethan Allan, near the Canadian border. And I may at once say that I took an immense liking for the American Regular officer, which was increased during the year by my subsequent acquaintance with him. I found him an excellent professional soldier, keen, intelligent and hard-working and a thorough gentleman. I was surprised to come across so few officers in Washington or any of the other great cities, and still more so to find that they were treated by the ordinary business man (who, after all, forms, with his belongings, nine-tenths of the population) with a scarcely veiled contempt, especially from the 'Society' point of view. Of course the officer, being poorly paid, besides being heavily engaged with his duties, cannot afford to spend time or

money in amusing himself and other people, and consequently he is but seldom seen. But I confess that it made my gorge rise to hear, as I sometimes did, the Regular officers being referred to in a sort of half-pitying, half-contemptuous way by rich young bounders (and even girls), who evidently looked upon the profession of arms as not to be mentioned in the same breath with the glorious profession of making dollars. Let us hope they have changed their opinion by now.

In those days the total strength of the Regular Army was only some 64,000 men—besides, of course, the National Guard, a huge mass of practically untrained men, of whose discipline the less said the better. But the discipline of the Regulars was first-rate—very strict in essentials for the most part, but curiously elastic, to British eyes, in others. I will give two instances.

I received a letter from an Englishman, an ex-soldier, who had enlisted in the American Army. He had not liked the life and had deserted, thinking that if caught he would, as in England, get only some twenty-eight days I.H.L. To his horror he got eighteen months' imprisonment, and he appealed to me to get him off. Of course I could not interfere. On another occasion I was, in uniform and in company with the G.O.C., watching the embarkation of some troops for Cuba. I noticed one man standing apart and wearing some equipment of a new type, and I asked the General whether I might look at it. "Why, certainly," said the General, and together we proceeded to inspect it. Yet the man never even stood to attention, and went on eating an apple! I suppose I must have looked a trifle astonished, for my companion said at once, "You see, our discipline is not quite the same as the British." And in camp later on, and at field-days, there seemed more familiarity between officer and man than I thought quite proper; though

there was no idea of insubordination, and orders were promptly obeyed and without question. The rank and file too were an intelligent lot and picked up the idea, and acted on it, quickly.

Even in those days the Prohibition craze had begun, and with the usual results. Owing to female influence exerted on Congress the unfortunate troops were allowed no liquor in barracks, and the canteen was only allowed to sell teetotal horrors instead of good honest beer. Consequently, as might have been foreseen, the vilest of liquor-shops sprang up immediately outside barracks, and the men used to drink there instead, with the result that might have been expected.

Practically all the officers (Regular) had entered the Army through West Point Academy, and it was chiefly owing to their four years' training here that they developed into such good men. It certainly was hard work—for they scarcely got any leave at all—and the discipline, moral as well as physical, was undoubtedly severe. Personally I thought they overdid it a little; but the fact remains that after going through that mill they issued from it as gold that has been refined in the fire.

Every Congress member (or thereabouts) had the right to nominate a candidate for the entrance examination, and consequently the material was extremely various, from the varnished millionaire's son down to the ferryman or cattle-rancher of the Wild and Woolly West. Once arrived, they were welded into shape. Morals, honour, truth and justice were almost literally hammered into them. So were dancing, manners and above-board relations with women, by weekly dances and entertainments at which the ladies of the neighbourhood regularly assisted. The cadets were allowed no luxuries in their bare little rooms—not even home photographs. All books and clothes had to be in the regulation places, and marks were lost if a cap was on the

wrong peg or a book upside down. They were fallen in and marched to their classrooms or dining-halls, &c., and strict order was maintained whilst they were at work. Much more than merely military subjects was taught to them—*e.g.*, making speeches, précis-writing, principles of teaching, &c. But woe betide the liar or the bully or the sneak, or the perpetrator of any disgraceful or dishonourable act: out he went, even if he had nearly finished his time.

During my visit the Commandant<sup>1</sup> took me into his office, where he was investigating “a very serious offence; one or two boys will probably be expelled over it.” I was prepared for something terrible; but as the story developed I fear that, in my eyes, the offence only amounted to a perfectly harmless though perhaps rather foolish joke. What had happened was merely that a newly-joined and rather silly youngster had had his leg pulled by his comrades. They had ‘kidded’ him into the belief that when the gong sounded at dinner, it meant that everyone was to stand to attention. The gong was really only a signal by the head-waiter to his underlings to bring in the next course; but the boy stood up, and was, of course, unmercifully chaffed by his companions. I own I could not see any necessity for making ‘heavy weather’ over this trifle; but the Commandant was in deadly earnest about putting down ‘hazing’ (Anglice, bullying), and considered that this awful crime came under that heading.

The College is built in pretty surroundings on rocks overlooking the Hudson River, and any new buildings—as the foundations have to be cut out of the rock—are consequently very expensive. But though Congress cuts down to the bone all ‘appropriations’ in the Budget for the Army (and insists on all the figures being written in *words*—for fear of being cheated), they look on West Point as on a favourite child and

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Howze, who kindly put me up for the night.

refuse it nothing. They have good reason for this; for once a man has passed through the four years' ordeal he is looked on as thoroughly trustworthy—in the Army or elsewhere. After appointment an officer need only spend one year (or is it two?) in the Army, and can then leave it, if he likes, to take up some business or other situation. And he can be quite certain of obtaining employment, with the *cachet* that West Point has conferred upon him; for that means that he is not only well trained, but that he is thoroughly trustworthy as well.

I found the American people most hospitable. For instance, when returning from Canada to New York, I went to call on Mr J. W. Sterling, to whom I had a letter of introduction from Lord Mountstephen. I had despatched the letter beforehand, and when I made Mr Sterling's acquaintance he not only insisted on putting me up for a couple of nights, but I found that he had secured tickets for the Opera on one night and an invitation to an interesting dinner-party on the next! And in Washington there were numerous dinners and balls to which I was bidden.

The Diplomatic Corps also was always extremely friendly. Nearly all the wives of the diplomats were American. It is a profession to which numerous American ladies gravitate; and they are so adaptable that they take on the nationality of their husbands with the greatest ease. Among other such representatives were Frau von Speck (German Ambassadress), Baroness Moncheur (Belgian—a charming lady, who is still a great friend), Madame Jusserand (French), Madame Van Swinderen (Dutch), Madame Hauge (Norwegian) and Señora Riaño (Spanish); and the wives of a number of Councillors and Secretaries as well hailed from Columbia.

Then of other hostesses there were Mrs Hobson, a delightful courteous old lady and a great

'character'; the three elderly Miss Pattens, always full of the latest gossip; Mrs Cowles, sister of the President; Mrs Lodge, wife of the well-known Senator; Mrs Longworth ('Princess Alice' Roosevelt), newly married to the (late) Speaker of Congress, bubbling over with animal spirits and a 'real good sort.' She drove me out to Rock Creek Cemetery in her 'electric' car to have a look at St Gaudens' wonderful figure of Silence(?) over Adams' tomb, and nearly finished both our careers in a ditch. Then there were Mrs Cameron, the Olivers and the Boardmans and the Jacksons, and Mrs Townsend, whose balls were the envy of the town; Mrs Barney the artist; and, last but not least, Mrs Wardour, with two charming daughters. All these ladies were kindness itself, and rendered my stay in Washington a very happy one.

The town itself, too, was a most pleasant change from the ordinary noisy sky-scrapered variety; for trees were planted down almost every street, and, thanks to the despotic but benevolent triumvirate who ruled the city, no house was allowed to be more than three storeys high. Immediately outside the town you came into pretty rolling wooded country, with Chevy Chase Sporting Club a few miles out; and you could actually, as I did, go out 'possum shooting after dining in the town. Close to the White House, on the Potomac, was a rough impenetrable canebrake; and the western quarter of the city was given up to the negro population, whose quaint goings-on and fantastic processions were always a sight worth seeing. But I am told that this is now all changed, that the negroes have gone to Harlem and that the town is spreading itself farther and farther afield—as usual. But the climate was odd. I have a note in my diary that in the beginning of April we had a snow-blizzard, and on the 30th of that month it was 87° in the shade; by 9th May it had gone down to 51°, with snow in Pennsylvania,



and on 19th May it was too hot to take any exercise ! And later on, in August, the damp heat was almost unbearable, with the thermometer at 84° at 1 A.M.

But I was not going to stay in Washington all the year. I was accredited as Military Attaché to Mexico as well as to the United States ; and as I knew I should only have a year altogether in America I determined to see as much of it as I could. So on 23rd May I left for Mexico, *viâ* Cuba.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## MORE OF AMERICA.

It certainly was very hot in Havana—only 85° or so, it is true, but as the air never sank below that figure day or night, and it was frightfully moist, I felt it much more than the 122° I had experienced in the dry Sudan. I was only there for three and a half days; but during that time I acquired a good deal of information from the kindly Mr Morgan, U.S. Consul, about the island and its relationships with the U.S. since 1896. Also I saw for the first time the game of Jai Alai (called Pelota in the Basque country, whence it had come), in which the players, playing in a ninety-yards court, performed prodigies of activity and skill. I believe few of them live after forty; and after seeing their terrific efforts in that climate I can well believe it.

I went one day over the Cabaña cigar-factory. It was most interesting, and I can now understand why good cigars are so expensive. For the wages of the workers, especially of those rolling high-class cigars, were terrific: a guinea a day for rolling about sixty cigars, and out of those the maker was allowed to keep six for himself—amounting altogether to about 4½d. for the making (alone) of each cigar. Even some quite moderate-sized but delicious cigars cost at the factory 14 dollars (nearly 59s.) a hundred.<sup>1</sup> And when to the leaf and the rolling you add the

<sup>1</sup> By this time they are probably much more expensive.

cost of transport and Customs duties and sellers' profits, it is no wonder that only millionaires in England can afford good cigars. But, although so moist in that climate that you could almost tie them into knots, the cigars burnt perfectly, with a silky, velvety flavour that deserts them entirely by the time they have reached England. "Green" cigars? you will ask. No; there are no such things as 'green' cigars, in spite of what the dealers say, for you cannot smoke a cigar under two years old. The leaves are always hung up for at least that period, and they are certainly not green at the end of it.

It took my steamer nearly four days to get to Vera Cruz—the port for Mexico City,—a horrible place, as hot as hell and much more dusty. But as the train that afternoon began to climb the foothills of the Mexican plateau the air became cooler and cooler. Soon we were passing through primeval forest, with huge creepers draping the trees and strange-looking Indians peeping out from behind the great banana leaves. And before sunset we had reached the town of Orizaba, at the foot of the snow-clad mountain of that name, where I spent the night in a cool and clean little hotel, looking on to a picturesque little plaza where all the town congregated at night.

Next day on and up the marvellous railway track, British built, that winds its way through the cliffs and clings to the sides of the rocks overhanging drops of thousands of feet—it climbs 3071 feet in  $18\frac{1}{2}$  miles—and so over the plateau at the top, through fields of *sesil* and *maguay*, to Mexico City. And here one is soon reminded of the 7000 feet or more which separate the city from sea-level, for after three violent singles sets at tennis on the following morning I only just managed to get back to my hotel, where I collapsed for two hours or more.

Max-Müller,<sup>1</sup> our temporary representative there and an old friend, gave me a warm welcome, and took me round all the diplomats on the following day, and to the President, Porfirio Diaz, on the next. I was much interested to make the old gentleman's acquaintance. With a dark olive complexion and white hair he did not give me such an Indian impression as I expected, and his expression was that of a benevolent old company director. We discussed artillery matters at some length—in French, as far as I remember, as my Spanish would not have been good enough—and his manner was courtesy itself. But beneath the polished surface there was an iron core, for this was the man who had despotically, successfully and powerfully directed the destinies of his country for many years, getting himself re-elected as President time after time by the charmingly simple method of locking up all the possibly adverse voters on the day of election. Never had Mexico been so prosperous or so peaceful as under his iron rule; but it was an understanding, just and benevolent rule, and woe betide his enemies! Quite rightly he kept all the artillery of the Army in Mexico City under his own eye; and when, in spite of all the good work of his thirty-five years' Presidency, he was forced to resign, five years after my visit, he took with him the respect of all (even that of his enemies) and not a scrap of loot, for he died a poor man. And since his deposition the country has been steadily on the downhill grade.

Three weeks passed pleasantly by. I had not meant at first to stay so long, but 'manceuvres' were held out to me as a bait and I felt it my duty to attend them. In the end they were cancelled and came to nothing; but I had seen something of the Mexican Army meanwhile and their powers of marching in the thin air of these altitudes. Pure Indians they were, practically all of them; as an

<sup>1</sup> Later Minister at Warsaw, &c.

instance, in barracks they had nothing to sleep on except a straw mat, whilst their wives (or so-called wives) came in every day to cook for them, and occasionally at night too.

I was lucky in finding some more old friends, the King-Noels, staying in the city, and together with Mr and Mrs Jerome (the Consul and his charming wife, he being an obvious Bonaparte by descent) we made many excursions in the neighbourhood. Besides visiting some lovely old sixteenth-century churches and tumble-down monasteries in the woods, we went to see the electric-power works at Necaxa, some twenty miles off. Here the Necaxa River falls over two cliffs, one being a drop of 350 and the second of 740 feet, with the power-house and turbines at the bottom. Glorious scenery; and in order to visit the place properly we had to descend by a rickety little open platform, with wobbly hand-rails, attached to a rope stretched from the top of the cliff at a steep angle to the bottom, so that during the *trajet* we were in mid-air. It was somewhat alarming, but it must have been even more so for the officials when the works were first opened in state. For the big-wigs found themselves stuck half-way down in mid-air for two hours; something had gone wrong with the engine, and there they had to stay until it was repaired.

Would that I had space to tell of all our charming rides and excursions in the neighbourhood of Mexico City and of all that I saw and did in that delightful part of the world; of our visit to the old-world hacienda of Xalpa,<sup>1</sup> the property of Don Guillermo de Landa y Escandon, where our host met us at the station with an ancient carriage drawn by six highly-caparisoned mules driven by a terrific-looking bandit in a huge silver hat, and gave us an afternoon's shooting at partridges (*godorniz* by name) and hares;

<sup>1</sup> On our way thither we passed a station bearing the euphonious name of Ixtlilxochitl.

of our ride to the magnificent scenery of Temango, on the edge of the plateau, where you looked down on a panorama of forest and silver streams stretching right down to the sea; and of the beautiful old monastery of Santa Fé, a ride (ladies included) of nearly forty miles there and back. Everyone rides there, of course, for the roads (at all events at that period) were abominable, and even the tracks through the forest had occasionally to be made passable by the free use of our *machetes* (those big sword-knives that every peasant carries). And one has to get accustomed not only to the Mexican saddles but also to the horses, for they are trained to start off at a gallop the moment that you put your foot in the stirrup, and woe betide you if you do not know of this delightful custom! (The first time it happened I went flat on my back, and the horse required some catching.)

I got away eventually towards the end of June, and on my way north stopped for a visit to the silver and amethyst mines of Guanajuato, where the Indian miners still preferred, for a wage of about 3d. a day, to use the corkscrew staircase tunnelled in the rock in about 1540 to a depth of some 900 feet; and they carried the ore up on their backs.

The train journey across the plateau was hot and dusty, and the scenery—dead level with hardly anything to see except unending fields of the *maquey* aloes—depressing in the extreme. But at last, *viâ* El Paso, Albuquerque, Winslow and the Arizona Desert—a desolate tract with nothing in it but scorching rocks, sage-brush, euphorbia and other cacti (God help the poor people who first traversed it in wagons on their way to the Promised Land in 1840 or thereabouts!)—I arrived at the Grand Canyon of Colorado, and put up there in a comfortable little hotel at the very edge of the chasm.

The citizens of the U.S.A. are justly celebrated for their overwhelming use of superlatives. But in

this instance I give them a free hand, for the Canyon is simply stupendous ; language can hardly express its wonders. To begin with, it is over a mile deep, and after a long look I judged its breadth at about four miles. Wrong again ; it is thirteen miles across. And the colouring ! This huge abyss is full of tumbled masses of rocky hills of every shape and description, with colossal peaks of every fantastic shape and jagged precipices of appalling depth. And the whole thing is a brilliant blood-red, shading into purple, ochre, orange, pale yellow, scarlet and rich blue. You would not think that such a thing could exist in this world.

There is a deep and muddy river at the bottom—the Colorado River ; and there is only one way down—the Angel Trail—which takes you steeply down the side of the near precipice, and I believe eventually lands you somewhere on the far side. But I did not go by it ; my time was short, and I preferred looking at it from the top, especially in the evening, when the chasm was full of white fleecy clouds resting on the pinnacles and turning the shadows to deep indigoes, vivid blues and silvery greys, with the red showing through. It was almost too marvellous for words.

The great earthquake at San Francisco had taken place about three months before, so, as my military duties led me in that direction, I thought I might as well have a look at what remained of the city. But on the way to Los Angeles I fell in with an Englishman on the train, one Mr Montagu Sharpe, who expatiated on the wonders of the Pacific sea-fishing, and strongly recommended me—as I was always keen on the subject—to go to the island of Santa Catalina, some forty miles by steamer from Los Angeles, and try to catch a tuna. He also invited me to visit him at Santa Cruz, where he lived, and come out salmon-fishing (in the sea). I really could not resist these attractions, so on

arriving at Los Angeles I 'stopped off,' and the next day saw me at Santa Catalina.

Again I have no space in which to describe the delightful three days that I spent there under the tuition of the fisherman, Mexican Joe. The climate, although it was July, was absolutely perfect—warm, but soft and cool night and day, and I caught yellowtail, barracouta, sheepshead and albacore to my heart's content; but never a tuna did I get, though I baited with flying-fish and spent a whole day in trying. The record tuna (giant mackerel, different from the tarpon, which is a giant herring) had been caught twelve months before (251 lb.); but it was a little early in the year now, and very few had been seen. Another delight was rowing about in a glass-bottomed boat and watching the wonderful fish of all colours of the rainbow swimming about below. It is indeed a paradise for fishermen, and if you get bored and have a rifle, you can go out stalking wild goats on the hills.

The chief things I remember about Los Angeles—there was no Hollywood then—is the size (and tastelessness) of the oranges, and the fact that there was a list of 143 items (I counted them) all ready for consumption on the breakfast menu. But I only stayed a night there and hurried on to San Francisco.

Half the town was down, for there had been a big fire after the earthquake, and whole districts, including the Chinese one, which I had badly wanted to see, had been wiped out of existence. The huge town hall, recently built, with alabaster columns (for which enormous sums had been paid) round the great cupola, was in ruins. The unfortunate part of it for the Mayor, who had financed the building, was that several of these columns had been left standing, discovering themselves to the meanest intellect as painted iron tubes filled with rubble! There was trouble over that. The great post-office, a very fine structure, had not collapsed, but had



been shaken crooked as if with a giant hand, and they were trying to pull it straight with steel cables. And the bronze statue of Agassiz had been hurled from its high pedestal and was sticking upside down, buried up to the neck in the asphalt roadway—a most odd-looking object. Hundreds of the older poor people, rendered homeless by the crash, were living in bungalows hastily erected near the Golden Gate, where, although partly compensated by the lovely view, they would probably have to stay for the rest of their lives.

But nearly half the city, the portion on the high ground, was still in existence, and life was going on there much as usual. Curiously few lives had been lost; but everywhere one heard stories of wonderful escapes and wonderful doings during the week following the earthquake; for all communications had been cut, and millionaires had had to take their places in the queues formed for rationing the scanty foodstuffs that were at first available.

I remained nearly a fortnight at San Francisco, most hospitably treated by General Greely and many other friends. During this time I soaked in quantities of information from a military point of view, and also spent a couple of days with my hospitable friend of Santa Cruz, our bag (three rods) being seventeen 'steel-head' salmon one day and twelve the next, the biggest fish (which fell to my rod) weighing  $24\frac{1}{2}$  lb. We baited with so-called sardines and trolled from a motor-launch, and the fish gave us quite fair sport.

San Francisco in July was not nearly as hot as one would expect; indeed, three of the days there I noted in my diary as 'cold.' But Berenda, in the trough-like San Joaquin Valley, was like a furnace when I reached it on my way to the Yosemite district, for I thought I might as well see the wonders of that valley whilst I was in this part of the world. Only a month before, the stage-coach had been held

up by a masked bandit (in white overalls) with two revolvers as it was coming round a turn in the road. His *modus operandi* was simple, for he made the passengers descend and form up in two rows facing inwards with their hands up, and then forced a man to go through all their pockets and hand him the proceeds. Having done this and loaded the swag on to his horse, he gracefully posed for some ladies to snapshot him with their Kodaks, and then galloped off. I made some remarks to General Greely on the ignominy of some twenty people allowing themselves thus to be robbed, and suggested that if the men had only made a concerted rush they might have got him, though with perhaps some loss. But rather to my surprise the General maintained that that would have been a most improper thing to do, as, if shooting had once started, some woman might have been damaged.

I am not going to try to describe the Yosemite. The road was appallingly dusty, and so were the mountains; the soil was everywhere red and crumbly, even on the highest peaks. But the views and waterfalls were quite fine, and so was the sequoia-tree, 329 feet high, through which the stage-coach drove. Another monster was lying prone, also about 100 yards long. The echo of its crash, according to my informant, did not die away for a fortnight.

Salt Lake City, with its tabernacle, was the next point of interest, and I took a rapid bathe in the waters to see what they were like. But the lake was terribly shallow, and it was difficult to get deep enough in to swim, so I had to be content to lie on my back, with two-thirds of my body out of water—a strange feeling.

Two days afterwards found me in Denver, where I climbed, per cog-railway, to the top of Pike's Peak, over 14,000 feet high, with snow on top. And after that I spent three days with the hospitable officers at Fort Riley—General Wint, Colonel Car-

lington and others—where I saw some field-training, &c., in progress, in which the 18th and 30th Infantry and 9th (Coloured) Cavalry Regiments, besides the 7th Siege Battery and other field batteries, took part. It was all good, especially, I thought, the artillery work.

I had been instructed by the D.M.O. to go and report on the rumoured flying-machine that the brothers Wright had constructed, and accordingly I made my way to Dayton, Ohio, on the way back to Washington. Here I was met at the station by the brothers Wilbur and Orville, who conducted me to the paternal mansion, a small wooden house with a broad verandah; and after an excellent meal, presided over by Mr Wright, senior—a courteous old gentleman, bishop or dean of a local Christian church community—we had a most interesting talk. The brothers were nice modest fellows, not the least typical of the usual American inventor, and before coming to details they insisted on my seeing some of the chief representative inhabitants who had actually seen the machine in the air, “coming along like a railroad train,” as one of them expressed it. They could not show me the machine itself (the word aeroplane had not yet come into use), as it had been dismantled for repairs; but they explained it at some length, telling me of their initial struggles and of their joy when it first rose into the air. Their chief preoccupation, it appeared, had been to prevent newspaper reporters from publishing fulsome reports of the new wonder before it was really ready, and all tests had to be carried out with the greatest secrecy. I expect the natural desire not to have their secrets ‘jumped’ had also something to do with it.

Then came business. To my inquiries as to the cost of a machine they answered that they were willing to sell one machine, with its set of formulæ for construction, and one of the brothers to go to

England and explain it, for the modest sum of £20,000 ! Any other-sized machine, bigger or smaller, with *its* set of formulæ—which they assured me were quite different according to size—would be another £20,000. And with this I had to be content. It is hardly surprising that our War Office's answer to this was 'nothing doing'; they would wait for developments.

The French Government, however, took the matter up, and two years afterwards Wilbur Wright took a machine over, set it up and flew it. In those days the initial impetus could only be given by a system of counterweights and rails, and so I found it when, on a visit to the French manoeuvres in 1908, I went to see my friend Wilbur, for he had promised to give me a fly. To my life's end I shall always regret that the fly did not come off; but when, after making all arrangements, I arrived on the ground, I was met by the Wrights' agent, who told me that Wilbur had had a cable that morning with very bad news. His brother Orville had flown with an officer named Latham and had crashed badly. Latham had been killed, and Orville had fractured a thigh. I caught sight of Wilbur sitting in his tent, with his head in his hands; tears were streaming down his face, his shoulders were trembling convulsively, and when he looked up and recognised me he could not speak, whilst his outstretched hand was shaking like an aspen. No question of flying that day, poor fellow, nor for many days after, and I had to postpone my first fly for two years.

To return to America. On my way to Washington I went to see another inventor who claimed to have invented a helicopter machine which would rise in the air, hover and return quietly to the ground. He had only a model, which he explained to me; but when the great moment came the model only rose about an inch, there was a bang, a fizzle, and

the wires went phut, and I left the poor inventor picking up the pieces. I might add that even in this year of grace (1932) the helicopter craft has not yet satisfactorily materialised.<sup>1</sup>

At Washington it was frightfully steamy and hot, day and night; but I only stayed long enough to finish up the work that was waiting for me, and then followed Sir Mortimer Durand and the Embassy to Lenox in Massachusetts—delightful climate and scenery. Then on to Newport, where many friends, including Mrs Cornelius Vanderbilt, Mrs Ladenburg, Mr and Mrs Lanier and many others conspired to give me a most charming and hospitable time; and then back to Washington, staying for a couple of nights on the way at Tuxedo with the Pierre Lorilards. Poor lady, she died not very long after.

The French Military Attaché, Major Fournier,<sup>2</sup> had long ago agreed with me to visit the autumn manoeuvres—the biggest of the year, although only brigade ones—which were to take place at Tacoma at the end of September. Now Tacoma was a very long way off, being in fact in Oregon, close to the Canadian frontier and the Pacific; but I need hardly say that this was an additional incentive to us, as we should thus see much more of the country.

We started accordingly on 8th September, and put in a day at Chicago, seeing the stockyards, Wheat-pit, slaughter-houses (horrible, with *wooden* floors all slippery with blood) and other sights. I also met our Consul, Mr Erskine, who had very kindly made arrangements for us; but what created on me the deepest impression was that his annual pay, in one of the most expensive cities in the world, was only £800, and on this he, with a large family, was expected to entertain manufacturers and capitalists, and push British trade to the utmost from a social point of view. Meanwhile the German

<sup>1</sup> Even La Cierva's "Autogiro" is not yet quite perfect.

<sup>2</sup> I *think* the same officer who commanded at Maubeuge in 1914.

Consul was getting £2000 a year, plus an almost unlimited table-allowance. And yet Erskine was always being found fault with from home because British trade was rapidly being out-distanced by its German rival!<sup>1</sup>

As another instance of our 'penny-wise pound-foolish' principles, I might add that of our Legation at Mexico City. There had been no proper house for it, but an excellent house had just come into the market at an extremely moderate price. Our Minister secured the option and wrote home most urgently to recommend the purchase, adding that the offer was only open up to a certain date, and that a cable answer one way or the other was imperative. The home authorities sanctioned the purchase, but, in order to save the cost of a cable, sent their reply by ordinary post. It arrived five days after the option had lapsed, and eventually the Legation had to be content with a much worse and much more expensive house!

My friend Mr J. J. Hill, the great railway and financial magnate (Canadian by birth), whom we met at St Paul's, most kindly arranged that on our way west we should have a car to ourselves, and that it should be hitched on to the various trains taking us to our destination. This was an inestimable advantage, for in this way we avoided having to change (sometimes in the middle of the night) or even sleep at out-of-the-way places near the frontier; and in this car we remained until we reached Calgary. But on the way we stopped off at Yellowstone Park, and did the whole round—mostly in cold wet weather—in six days.

Here was another natural wonder of the world. No space again to tell of its giant 'paint-pots' of boiling coloured mud, its great geysers, 'Old Faithful' spouting punctually every fourteen minutes;

<sup>1</sup> I believe that since that date the Consul's salary has been largely increased.

the Turquoise, Emerald and other pools, apparently bottomless and of beautiful transparent colours; the rock in the middle of the icy torrent spouting boiling water; mud volcanoes spitting hot mud at you; the obsidian cliff of black glass; the lake, covered with the tamest of wildfowl and full of trout which you might, if lucky, catch and boil in a neighbouring pool without taking them off the rod (we were *not* lucky, though we tried for two hours); the Siamese-twin tree; the concentric river; the coloured cañon; the waterfalls; and, above all, the swarms of prong-horn antelope, Virginian deer, bison, wapiti, and a number of other animals, including bears and coyotes which, although not actually coming up to be stroked, were so tame as almost to do so.

The happy hunting-grounds for bears were, of course, the mounds of old jam-tins and tomato-cans behind the hotels. Even an occasional grizzly helped himself to some sweet morsel, though in that case the other bears made themselves scarce. But the only time—so we were told—that a grizzly had been unkind to a human being was when he (the grizzly) had a bad toothache, and, being irritated at the appearance of a boy, hunted him up a tree and kept him there till his toothache was gone.

A curious incident had happened a year or two before. A tribe of Indians in reservation to the south of the Park had suddenly, but illegally, taken into their heads the idea of visiting, quite peacefully, another tribe to the north, and their route lay across the Park. Now there was a large bunch of tourists, travelling in char-à-bancs, also on the trek in the Park at that time; and when they came across the Indians they were seized with panic and fled in all directions, some of them foolishly firing revolvers as they went. The Indians were naturally somewhat annoyed at this treatment, but none had been hit, so they moved on. But one white tourist *had* been

hit, and, unseen, he collapsed by the side of an almost extinct camp-fire. He was revived by the fire blazing up and setting his trousers alight. Having extinguished the flames and alleviated his burns with some difficulty he collapsed again, but was awakened by a U.S. cavalryman on patrol, who hoisted him on to his horse. But in crossing a rocky stream the double-burdened horse stumbled, and our friend fell off and was nearly drowned. The trooper rescued him, managed to get him on to the saddle again, lying crosswise, and started to lead the horse. But in the struggle to get him up the girths had got loosened, the saddle slipped round, and over he went again. And even now his troubles were not at an end; for when he was comfortably in bed at the hotel his friends came to visit him and to condole with him on his misfortunes. Among them was an enormously stout man who, to emphasise his sympathy, sat down on the bed. It went crash.

Certainly some people have no luck.

Thanks to Mr Hill's car, we had no difficulty in getting across the Canadian frontier to Calgary, and so on, through lovely scenery, to Banff. There I received a telegram from the U.S. Army people telling me that manœuvres were cancelled! But as we had arrived thus far, and I had faint hopes of being allowed to conclude my Military Attaché appointment by returning home *viâ* the Pacific, reporting on Hawaii and the Philippines on the way back, we went on to Vancouver and Victoria. I shall never forget an early morning glimpse of a terrific thunderstorm when we were passing through one of the gorges of the magnificent Fraser River, tearing down to the sea through black and jagged hills outlined by the vivid lightning.

Victoria and the surrounding islands were very pretty, but we stayed there a night only, and went on to Esquimault. Here I was almost too well received, for the Commandant insisted on taking us



*both* over the batteries and began explaining at length—in spite of my nudges and frowns—the positions and ranges of the guns. I could see that Fournier was greedily soaking in all the information; so I made a hasty excuse, and we departed to a premature luncheon. And so per Yankee oil-boat to Seattle, and thence to Tacoma. Here at last we found some American troops and watched some field-gun practice almost under the shadow of the beautiful Mount Rainier volcano, glowing pink in its summit of snow (14,000 feet odd). Then back, through lovely pine-woods and over soft carpets of needles, to Seattle. That town was undergoing a boom in ‘real estate,’ and it made me smile to hear from Club acquaintances that old Europe was played out and that the future hub of the universe was going to be Seattle. (But I never let out that probably not three Englishmen in a hundred had ever even heard of Seattle.)

Bad news from Cuba, together with an intimation of another U.S. expedition to that island being imminent, knocked my ideas of world travel on the head; and six days later I was back in Washington, having encountered three railway accidents on the way—not serious—only one man, and that an Italian platelayer, being killed.

Among my other duties was that of seeing troops embark for Cuba, and to see this I paid a visit to Fortress Monroe and Newport News—respectively the Army and Navy stations on the James River in Virginia. I fear I was not very much struck with the embarkation business; but then they have had far less experience than ourselves. Here, by the way, I found a little curiosity shop kept by an Englishman; and in response to my inquiries as to whether he had anything of interest to show me—for his shop window was not attractive—he pulled an old seal out of his pocket and asked me what I thought of it. The arms of Scotland, a lion *séjant*

as crest, 'M.R.' below and 'Dieu ma Défense' above. This was most interesting. Mary, Queen of Scots? He said he thought so too. He had bought it among some rubbish from an old Virginia farmhouse. He could not guarantee it—there was no history attached to it; but he had sent an impression to the British Museum, and they had replied that, judging from that, it *might* be genuine. How much? £50. It was tempting. But after consideration I decided that £50 was too much money for me to spend on what might possibly turn out to be a fraud. I hope, however, that someone with a longer purse than mine has since then been less cautious.

Hunting in America is very good fun. I went to stay with my excellent friend, 'Winty' Chandler—sportsman, big-game shot, yachtsman and the most cheery of men (now, alas! dead)—at his place in the Genesee Valley, not far from Niagara. Both he and his charming wife (a sister of the late Marion Crawford) and his family of seven, ranging from Laura, aged nineteen,<sup>1</sup> to Teddy, aged seven, hunted with extraordinary keenness. It was more like an Irish hunt than an English one. The 'fields' were small—not more than about twenty all told. Everybody knew everybody else and everybody else's horses, and there was a perpetual stream of friendliness and good-humoured chaff always on tap. The country was all grass, with some terrible young hills and cliffs and woods to be got through or over, and some still more appalling fences. These were of two sorts: high 'snake-fences,' of big horizontal logs with absolutely no 'give' in them; and 'slat-wire' fences, consisting of upright pointed slats from four to five feet high, connected together with two strands of wire. There was a certain amount of 'give' in these, but not much, and they never broke: they only turned you over. I had my heart in my mouth the first time I went at these;

<sup>1</sup> An excellent artist even then.

but my mount was an excellent 'lepper' and cleared the lot with the greatest ease: I even found myself jumping a gate with a strand of barbed wire a foot above the top (I need hardly say I had no idea the wire was there till I was safely over!). We had some capital scampers with the pack (Mr Wadsworth's English hounds, with an English huntsman), but I do not think we ever killed: the ground was too broken for that.

The only other pack I rode with was Mr Ralph Ellis's, with whom (and his delightful wife) I spent a very pleasant week on Long Island. The hounds were strange to British eyes—big hairy animals, like big otter-hounds for the most part, and each wearing a collar with the owner's name, in case they got lost in the great woods. On my asking the breed, my host informed me that they were "the true American hound" from the Southern States; but I am afraid I put my foot into it badly when I asked whether these were the hounds with which they used to hunt escaped slaves. They had, however, to keep up the connection, a most attractive Virginian huntsman, slow soft drawl and all, just like Owen Wister's hero. The hunting was rather original, for, although there were plenty of big gaunt foxes, they never left the woods; and as these were pretty thick, and impenetrable in most places to the ordinary horseman, the hounds had to be left largely to their own devices. Sometimes there were two, or even three, foxes afoot, and the pack split up after them in a most bewildering fashion. Occasionally there was a kill; but there were as a rule none of the field present to assist in the obsequies.

We also went out shooting there on the first day that the season opened—1st November. And this again was curious, for we had to start shooting at 8 A.M. in order to forestall the numerous uninvited guns who came out from New York. There is no

private property, as we understand it, in America. Everybody is allowed everywhere, and if you 'preserve' on your own land—well, the more fool you; for you will get but a very small proportion of the shooting. It will thus be understood that our bag on that day was not very large—only a wood-partridge or two; and, besides, it was not particularly safe. As you and your friends moved through the wood, walking in line, you would suddenly hear a bang in front of you, probably accompanied by the whistling of shot; and a seedy-looking individual, together with a gun and a doubtful-looking dog, would appear, and pass through your line, with no further greeting than a scowl: such at least was my experience.

Other visits, to the battlefields of Gettysburg and Bull Run, to Boston, to Harvard and finally to Ottawa again for a week or so, filled in the end portion of the year; and in the middle of January (1907) I left the shores of America for good, accompanied by the most pleasant recollections of my year's stay in the country.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## A.D.M.O. 2.

I HAD already, whilst in the States, been offered and had accepted a billet on the General Staff, again in the Intelligence Division—by this time rechristened the ‘Directorate of Military Operations’; and I took up my duties there within a few days of my return. My post was that of Assistant Director of Military Operations (A.D.M.O. 2), a high-sounding title which had little to do with operations; for it consisted in being in charge of a bunch of sections dealing with Germany, Austria, Italy and a good part of Central Europe, including Turkey and the Balkan States and part of Africa, besides (for one period at all events) the whole of South America. M.O. 1, under John Adye, dealt with our Colonies, and M.O. 3, under Aylmer Haldane and later under C. B. Money, with France, Russia, Asia and North America; but in the course of my four and a half years these sections were occasionally shifted about, so that I necessarily became acquainted with a good deal of what was going on in large portions of the globe. M.O. 4 was our Geographical Section (under Close), and M.O. 5 the Confidential Section, under Cockerill, and later, Macdonogh, who was D.M.I. during most of the War. Robertson had just been succeeded, as D.M.O., by my old friend Spencer Ewart, and towards the end of my time Henry Wilson took over the post, coming there direct from

his Commandantship at the Staff College ; so that practically all the heads were old personal friends or acquaintances of mine.

On looking over my diaries of those years I am chiefly struck with not only the number of times I dined out (and met a large number of interesting people), but also with the number of places I visited, both in England and abroad (chiefly on duty). But that does not mean that I did not do pretty hard work in the office, for, although I rarely went there before 10 A.M., I hardly ever got away before 6.30 or 7, although 5 was the nominal closing hour. It was, however, as always, work of an extraordinarily interesting nature, especially as it involved a great deal of business in connection with the Foreign Office. Indeed, very few men know of the immense amount of work, largely preparative, which went on in that much-abused institution the War Office, always jeered at for incompetence yet brilliantly vindicated by its results in the Great War.

And in this connection I cannot help recording the opinion of a high official in the Ministry of Information, a civilian, towards the end of the War. He and I were discussing the various Government Departments, with practically all of which he was necessarily in close touch. I asked him which he considered the most efficient and the most business-like of the lot. His answer came without hesitation, "Oh, the War Office, out and away!" "And the worst?" I pursued. He was not quite so sure about this. On the whole he thought the Treasury was the most difficult to deal with, and, bracketed with this, the—no, wild horses will not drag from me its name. Again, after the War, I made the casual acquaintance of an elderly stockbroker, head of his firm; and in course of conversation he mentioned that during three years of the War he was employed in one of the higher branches of the War Office. "Well, what did you think of its business side?" He

answered, "I thought it was the most wonderful organisation I had ever seen; the certainty, ease and celerity with which it transacted a colossal amount of work was literally marvellous." Considering that the speaker did not know that I was a soldier, and did not even know my name (nor did I know his till afterwards), I think this may be taken as fairly impartial evidence.

And only yesterday I was glancing through the centenary report of an important charitable institution. In it was mentioned that some thirty years ago, owing to mismanagement and other reasons, it was heavily in debt and on the verge of collapse. Five soldiers (four of them Guardsmen) came to the rescue; in two years it was on its legs again and clear of debt, and since then it has made a profit of nearly £1000 a year. Professional modesty forbids my pointing out the obvious moral of these three little stories.

Some of my trips abroad during this time were of some interest—at all events to myself. I find that in the autumn of 1907 my old friend the Mariner and I made another little spy journey—this time with purely friendly motives—to Holland. We wanted to see what sort of resistance the Dutch would be able to put up against the Germans if attacked by them. Individually we knew they would put up a tough fight, but what was the worth of their physical defences, naval and military, their fortresses, their rivers, their inundations? No necessity to enter into details, but we were not very favourably impressed. And then I went, *viâ* Copenhagen and the delightful old castle of Aaleholm, belonging to my excellent friends Count and Countess Raben, to Sweden, where, to my delight, I was invited<sup>1</sup> by the King to attend some manœuvres

<sup>1</sup> I rather think Tom Bridges (now Sir T. B., late Governor of South Australia), then our Military Attaché to the Scandinavian Courts, had something to do with this.

which were shortly taking place. It was all the kinder on the part of His Majesty as, not expecting it, I had no uniform with me; but I enjoyed the week's campaign enormously. The infantry were a fine sturdy-looking lot, and one of their customs I commend to our next Labour War Minister when the Army Estimates have been cut down to nothing at all—viz., that when the men came to the end of their day's ration of blank ammunition and wished to notify the enemy that they were still firing, they shouted out "Piff! Paff!" whenever they pressed the trigger.

Rennell Rodd was at that time our Minister in Stockholm, and after a pleasant two days at the end of the manœuvres at the castle of Tjolöholm, near Göteborg, belonging to Count Bonde, the Rodds very kindly put me up at the Legation. Thence we made a most interesting little excursion to the island of Gotland, and landed at Visby—a wonderful little old town, surrounded by high walls and practically left high and dry since it was stormed and sacked by the Danes about 1250. In those days it was the emporium for the exchange of goods between the East and Northern Europe, and even now old gold coins with Arabic inscriptions are sometimes picked up (I bought two or three myself). And there are still nine churches in the town dating from before 1000 A.D., besides a gallows of about that date.

Thence back to England, to a staff ride in Wales and to some stalking in Scotland, followed by some good partridge and pheasant shooting in Suffolk and Essex.

In the following spring I came to the conclusion that my knowledge of the Spanish Army was not what it should be, and, together with Cecil Lowther,<sup>1</sup> our Military Attaché in Paris and Madrid, I made a little trip in Spain, putting in a week in Morocco

<sup>1</sup> Now Major-General Sir H. C. Lowther, K.C.B.



with the Gerard Lowthers, who very kindly asked me to stay with them at the Legation in Tangier. Thence back to Seville, Granada and Madrid, where the King was good enough to ask me to luncheon. I was much struck both by His Majesty's hard work (for telegrams were being brought to him throughout the meal) and his intelligence, for he asked me some searching questions concerning Army and Indian, and even political, matters which I had some difficulty in answering straight off. Amongst the easier ones was the question so often asked by foreigners who do not understand our methods of administration: "How on earth do you manage to control 320 millions of natives in India with an army of only 70,000 men and a handful of British administrators?" Alas, both question and answer would have to be framed differently now!

In the autumn I attended French manoeuvres, officially this time and in uniform. We had quite a pleasant week, in very hot weather, the whole thing being much more informal than the German Kaisermanöver. The chief things that remain in my mind concerning them were, first, the marching powers of the heavily-laden infantry and their general adaptability, though the sight of a marching-column of these little men, trotting along 'all nohow' would have given fits to a German officer, and did indeed result in very misleading reports on their powers being sent home by the Germans present. Secondly, their fire-discipline and their attack in large bodies was, I thought, disappointing. And thirdly, the starved-looking horses of the artillery and train, and the poor horse-mastership throughout, even in the cavalry, did not impress me at all satisfactorily. But they were already introducing motor-transport, and from them we learnt a good deal in the next year or two about this important subject.

At the final reception, by the way, we were presented to the celebrated Colonel Picquart, then

Minister of War. A curious turn of fortune's wheel for one who, during the whole of the miserable Dreyfus case, had been violently *conspué* by the whole of his countrymen, and, if I remember right, had been deprived of his commission for his pluck in standing up for the much-maligned and ill-treated Jew ! The nation had now accepted him, outwardly, in full ; but they were maliciously waiting to see whether he would make a *gaffe* of any sort ; and when, most unfortunately, not being a good rider, he took a toss at the big annual Revue du Quatorze Juillet, his star collapsed altogether and he was heard of no more.

During the winter I was fully occupied, in addition to my ordinary work, in giving Intelligence lectures in many military parts of England and Scotland, and amongst other places I lectured at Shorncliffe to the 10th Brigade, then commanded by my old friend Eddie Wortley,<sup>1</sup> who was kind enough to put me up for the night. And there he told me the full story of the German Emperor's most tactless communication to the 'Daily Telegraph,' which, it will be remembered, raised not only a howl throughout Europe, but a roar of fury from his own well-beloved subjects as well. Everybody at the time was full of curiosity as to the genesis of this 'interview' and how it was engineered, but the secret was well kept. When Wortley told me the story and showed me the papers he swore me to secrecy, and I have never told a soul till this minute. But recently he gave me full leave to unfold the mystery, so here goes :—

As may be remembered, the Emperor, in the summer of 1908, spent some time—a month or so—in England, and for this purpose he took Wortley's fine house at Highcliffe, near Christchurch in Hants. Here he had numerous conversations with the proprietor, and unburdened himself, in his impetuous way, to him on the subject of the uncomfortable

<sup>1</sup> Now Major-General Hon. E. Stuart-Wortley, C.B., C.M.G.

relations between England and Germany, and other international matters, and how they ought to, and might, be put straight. He then asked Wortley to come to the Kaisermanöver in September, and twice he sent his staff away whilst he urged Wortley to put his (the Kaiser's) views before the British public. Wortley hummed and hawed, and said he was but a humble individual, and did not quite see how he could do it; but he would think over it and see whether it could be done.

The upshot of it was that he went to Harry Lawson (now Lord Burnham) of the 'Daily Telegraph,' one of the few newspapers which had shown itself fairly friendly to the Emperor, and with the latter's consent they arranged that it should take the form of an "interview" with the 'Daily Telegraph's' representative. So a confidential man of the 'Daily Telegraph' was sent down to Highcliffe, and Wortley gave him a full account of the Emperor's views, which were forthwith committed to paper and sent to the Emperor for approval. The Emperor approved the whole thing almost as it stood, and only altered three small things, in the writing of Paschwitz, his naval A.D.C.: (1) he substituted "French Consular representative" for "French Consul" (had been "several months") in Fez; (2) "large portions of the lower and middle classes" for "the majority of his people" as being hostile to and disliking England; and (3) "Germany was not willing, in the Boer War, to measure herself with a hostile naval Power" (or words to that effect), not "threatened with her armed strength to intervene in England's favour" (*sic*). The Emperor then sent it to Bülow (his Chancellor) for approval.

Now whether Bülow read it or not is more than doubtful. In all probability he did not, but just glanced at it and returned it to the Emperor, who, thinking it was all right, signed it (I saw the document myself), sent it back to Wortley and authorised

him to get it published.<sup>1</sup> Then the fat was in the fire with a vengeance!

As the 'Fortnightly Review' of December 1908 said: "The Germans are angry with the Kaiser, not because they disapprove of his objects, but because his methods have not been successful."

The 'Daily Mail' in its feverish search for the genesis of the article approached Wortley on the subject, but luckily they never asked him direct whether he was mixed up in the matter; and Wortley's ingenious answer, which was perfectly true, entirely put them off the track.

<sup>1</sup> According to Bülow's recently-published Memoirs, Vol. III., Bülow sent it to the Foreign Office without reading it, and the latter approved and returned it to the Emperor. Bülow, by the way, says that one of the reasons for his not reading it was that it was in a cramped handwriting, difficult to read. As a matter of fact, it was type-written.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## MOROCCO AGAIN.

IN the spring of 1909 it was decided that our new Minister in Tangier, Reggie Lister—another old friend of mine, who had succeeded Gerard Lowther there—should go to Fez in order to make the personal acquaintance of the new Sultan, Mulai Hafid. The Mission involved a Military Attaché; so I rapidly put my name forward for the job and, backed up by Reggie at the other end, was accepted. I anticipated, when I left London on 20th March, that the whole thing would not take more than five weeks; but owing to various reasons I did not get back to London for nearly three months.

The Mission consisted of Lister as 'Bashador'; Frank Rattigan (with his lovely wife) as First Secretary; Cyril, his brother, as Honorary Attaché; Irwin as interpreter; and Major Fowler, R.A.M.C., as Medical Officer—supplied by Gibraltar. As is usual in Eastern countries, the promised transport and supplies did not arrive to time, and the swollen rivers in the interior contributed to the delay, so that it was the 8th April before we could make a start. Everybody, of course, rode. There were no roads in the country, and least of all any motor-cars: those did not arrive for quite another four years. But the delay was opportune, as it happened; for the rains of the last three weeks had ceased at last, and the weather was glorious.

I have published a small volume on the doings of our Mission,<sup>1</sup> so it is unnecessary for me to enter into them in detail; nor is there room for them here. But from start to finish we had a most 'lovely' time. We plunged straight into the country, green and wooded for the most part, with low hills on all sides or blue hills in the distance, and intersected, almost too often, with rushing streams which were not always too easy to ford. Added to this, the country was at that time of the year covered with flowers, at some points forming sheets of vivid yellow, blue, red and lilac, so that it was a joy merely to be alive and ride through them. One village indeed, a cluster of mud-huts with reed-roofs, rejoiced in the poetic name of 'Nuafilak'—'May the flowers be with you'!—and the sparse inhabitants, ground down as they were by their Kaids and Bashas, always had a bright smile for the 'Bashador Ingliz' and his party, and brought their *muna*<sup>2</sup> in with punctuality. The difficulty (as in Abyssinia) was to go slow enough. The distance is only about 172 miles, and we might easily have covered it in a week or less; but in Morocco it is undignified for any great personage to travel with speed, and, besides, the local big-wigs were anxious to give us fitting and picturesque receptions on our journey. So that it took us eleven days before we reached the capital.

There was war in the neighbourhood of Fez; for the local Beni M'tir tribes, poor devils, had revolted against the intolerable exactions of the Sultan and his Bashas, and had in desperation taken up arms against them. And of the nervous tension thereabouts we had quite a visible proof; for, two days before reaching Fez, our camp was awakened about 5 A.M. by several shots close by. We all dashed out,

<sup>1</sup> 'Journal of our Mission to Fez, 1909' (Harrison & Sons).

<sup>2</sup> Supplies for travellers, which they have to provide in exchange for a remission of taxation.

and saw our escort hastily mounting and galloping out of the camp, firing as they went at a few scattered figures in the distance. Wild rumours went flying about that the camp had been attacked by robbers in search of the dollars we were bringing up, that the rebels were stealing our mules, that three men had been killed, &c. The excitement quieted down as the distant figures scattered out of range; and eventually it turned out that the Sultan's chamberlain, who had been sent to meet us, had, on approaching our camp, met some deserters with rifles, had demanded that they should give up their arms and that, on their refusing, the chamberlain's black orderly had, without orders, shot one of them through the body. The escort then, hearing firing, had jumped to the conclusion that some perfectly peaceable merchants who were passing by with their pack-mules had stolen ours, and they opened fire both on the miserable merchants and on the deserters, with, it is hardly necessary to say, no results. We found the poor boy who had been shot and brought him to camp, but he died shortly after.

Our entry into Fez on the following day was a gorgeous affair, for, dressed in full uniform, we were received not only by a crowd of portly white-clothed officials, but were escorted by a mass of soldiery clothed in red tunics of all sorts of shades, headed by a brass band in pink nightshirts. We passed, in the shade of the beautiful old golden-brown walls and through the lovely old archways embellished with mosaics, into the interior of the most picturesque town in the world, and took up our residence at the big Moorish house of Sidi Gebbas, which served us as headquarters during our stay there of over six weeks.

Two days after our arrival we went to be presented to the Sultan in the huge courtyard—some 250 yards by 100—of the M'shwar. It was lined with soldiers, and we were greeted on arrival by

our own National Anthem (more or less); but the Sultan himself was nearly twenty minutes late. At length we were conducted to the pavilion by the Kaid el M'shwar (deputy Master of Ceremonies), dressed in a salmon-yellow confection and carrying a long wand. His Majesty, a heavy-looking man with a long aquiline nose and pointed beard, was sitting *à la Turque* on a dark-green sofa, and after the Bashador had read out his official speech and had it translated by Irwin, the Sultan murmured a few words of polite welcome; but he was apparently in a great hurry, for the ceremonial of our presentation had hardly been got through before he mounted an enormous white horse and departed.

Next day we went to give him his presents, which we sent beforehand on mules, so as not to appear to be paying tribute, as the Moors would otherwise have imagined. The Sultan kept us waiting again, this time for half an hour, and paid little attention to the presents; but he launched out at once into high politics and had rather to be choked off by Lister, who suggested discussing these matters privately on a subsequent occasion. On the whole His Majesty did not make a very good impression; he was heavy and obstinate, and seemed neither so intelligent, dignified or well-mannered as his unfortunate brother and predecessor, Abd El Aziz, whom he had defeated and kicked out in the previous year.

After a day or two in the city we found out that we had got through only just in time. Two days before our entry the Sultan's big *mehalla* (expedition) of 3900 men had been badly beaten by about 5000 Beni M'tir, each side losing about 300 men; in addition, the Sultan lost five or six of his field-guns—in fact, all there were with the column. But in this curious country the disaster was looked upon by the Fasis<sup>1</sup> as a huge joke, and when I ventured to ask whether the loss of the artillery was not a

<sup>1</sup> Inhabitants of Fez.



very serious matter, I was told, "Oh, no. The Beni M'tir don't know how to work the guns, and they will shortly sell them back to us." And what are you to do with an army the officers of which, on receiving orders to distribute thirty-six rounds of ammunition per man, only distribute six rounds, and sell the other thirty *to the enemy*! It was also quite impossible to entrust the native officers with issuing pay and rations to the men, for they pouched the cash and sold five-sixths of the food for their own benefit. I discussed these things with Kaid Belton, an Englishman in the Moorish service, and he told me that he could not keep the machine-guns or the rifles oiled, for the men used the oil, directly it was issued, for frying their supper!

Verily Moorish warfare is (or was) a curious thing. It was quite clear that the object of each side was not to beat the adversary so much as to get loot. And victory is a dangerous thing, for your men disperse in search of loot. If they get loot they desert in order to sell it, and if they do not they desert in order to sell their rifles! In either case your army melts away.

In this instance, although the Sultan took immediate steps to collect another army, it was a long while before it started, for there was extremely little equipment and still less armament for it, and no transport. Even then the country was considered dangerous, as no doubt it was; consequently we were practically forbidden to leave the town, in case any of the Mission should be captured, which would make it extremely awkward for His Majesty. We were therefore obliged to keep inside the walls or thereabouts; and even a picnic we held on Jebel Tra'ats, only a mile or two outside Fez, led to an expression of the Sultan's severe displeasure.

Meanwhile there was plenty to do inside. Besides exploring the wonderfully picturesque bazaars and surroundings in company with the others, I devoted

most of my time to making a proper plan of the town, for none was in existence, the old French plan of thirty years before being quite incomprehensible and out of date. I had brought my cavalry sketching-case with me, and, although it was very small for the purpose, I succeeded in making quite a decently accurate sketch from a soldier's point of view. Oddly enough, the natives raised no objection. On the contrary, they took much interest in my doings, and several of them willingly assisted me in 'shooting' angles and slopes. (The plan was reproduced on my return to London, and I believe that some copies that we gave the French General Staff were found of considerable use in their subsequent fighting there in 1912.) Other sketching, water-colour and pencil, filled the time in pleasantly, for of subjects there was no end.

It is difficult to say which is most beautiful, the northern or southern side of the city. The north is perhaps more broken and more shady, and has more panoramas and more extensive views; but it would be hard to beat the beauty of the spot where the aqueduct, wreathed in ivy, crosses the rushing little stream of the Fas River and enters the town by the southern gate of Bab-el-Jedid. Farther up the hill the view, looking west over the palaces, with the several valleys running up together and disappearing in a sunset haze over the horizon, here broken by a profusion of tall poplars and slender towers, is really quite lovely. We went close to the south Bastiûn and looked over white snatches of the city framed in *kubbas*<sup>1</sup> and olive trees, and then entered again by the Bab F'tu'h, past a wall-fountain surmounted, curiously enough, by a line of Chinese tiles, had another close panoramic view of the town, and then dived down through moist and smelly alleys, round sharp corners, over the vilest of broken cobble pavement and through the most picturesque

<sup>1</sup> Saints' tombs.

of lanes and overhanging alleys and dark gateways into the bazaars again. Touches of colour remain in one's memory: a mauve lady, outlined against a tiny yellow *kubba*; a black woman carrying a roll of scarlet cloth on her head; a glimpse of an orange-clad figure washing its toes in the basin of the ancient and moss-grown courtyard of the Kairuîn mosque; two white-clothed women emerging into the sunlight from a dark cellar; every now and then a peep through a half-open doorway into a grey and brown mule-yard, or a glimpse of a rushing streamlet overgrown with green or flowered herbage and falling over blocks of grey stone hoary with age and lichen. There is no doubt about it—for picturesqueness Fez beats the world. Even Granada is not to be compared.

During our stay the Sultan certainly had his hands full. In addition to his campaign against the local Berbers he had just succeeded in capturing one Kittani, a Pretender who had, with the help of a few hundred men, been giving a great deal of trouble; and him he had flogged to death, in circumstances of horrible brutality, besides slitting the right hands of many of his followers—a much worse punishment than it sounds, for it involved the mortification of the hand and almost certain consequent death. And no sooner had he disposed of Kittani than another Pretender, Bu Hamara, arose on the other flank, blocked the eastern roads from Fez and necessitated another *mehalla* being despatched to keep him in check. But meanwhile the Sultan had sent for the Great Kaids of the South to come to do him homage, and their presence was—vainly as it turned out—expected to keep the other Berbers quiet.

Their arrival really was a magnificent sight. We went out at 6 A.M. to see them come. On moving towards the camp we came upon the whole of the cavalcade topping the slope towards us—first a line of thirty-six banners of all colours, then a bunch

of Gîsh (Mokhaznia<sup>1</sup>) men on foot, then the Great Kaid all together in line: Glawi on a big brown horse, dressed all in white, M'tugi next him on a great grey horse with a lemon-coloured saddle, Gundafi junior, Aissa ben Omar and a whole crowd of notabilities. And behind them, stretched over 300 yards or more, a great advancing line of wild southern horsemen, two or three deep, knee to knee, all with rifles at the 'carry.' As they approached the Bab Segma the red-clothed negro bodyguard of the Sultan lining the road presented arms, and their weird musicians in long pink nightgowns struck up a wild march of welcome. The horsemen crushed and struggled through the narrow gateway, under the very noses of the Mission, who had surmounted a high and unsavoury mound close by.

They were a barbaric-looking lot—a great mixture of types—from the burly negro with his shaven head and scalp-lock through the brown plainsman to the white-faced hill-Berber with Red Indian features and long black hair. Fanatical-looking they were not—they seemed rather intelligent than otherwise, and seemed to take much interest in their surroundings, and especially in Mrs Rattigan. There must have been 1200 to 1500 horsemen all told, mostly armed with Martinis and mounted on small wiry-looking horses of all colours. Of big Abda horses we only saw Glawi's great fat, handsome stallions, unsaddled and led by dismounted grooms—the true Moorish 'barb' at last. One pack-mule carried a couple of young wild-boars in panniers on either side; another one carried a young jackal; there were singing-birds in cages, and there were twenty or thirty long lean greyhounds led in leash, besides, doubtless, a number of hawks—but these last we did not see. As an addition to the live-stock each man carried a large assortment of flies on his shoulders, which, no doubt, took much pleasure in

<sup>1</sup> Government troops.

contracting mixed marriages with the Fez breed—of which there were already far too many.

Another interesting arrival, a few days later, was that of Ma-el-Ainin and his Blue Men from Mauritania, who were coming to beg for money and sustenance, from I know not how many hundreds of miles off; and they got it, for the Sultan was rather afraid of them, for religious reasons and political as well. They were a bunch of thirty or forty wild men, mounted on camels, mules, horses, or on foot, and headed by the saintly man on a mule, telling his beads, whilst his mule was led by a towzle-headed half-naked attendant brandishing a very European umbrella. The troupe kept up a wild chant as they moved, and gave us a sort of Buffalo Bill Show, swinging off their camels and horses and remounting at full speed whilst they discharged their rifles in all directions. Every man of them was dressed in some shade of blue, from indigo upwards, some of the higher and more dignified ones wearing dark blue silk linings to their clothes. There were few turbans, most of them wearing their own long black hair, whilst the facial type, though very dark, was not by any means that of the negro; it was of the clean-cut Arab type in some, and in others square and strong-looking, with well-developed features. It was a little difficult to find out where they lived, but we gathered that their chief town was called Shingit, and that it was forty-five days' camel-ride from anywhere.

Thus the days passed away, mostly amongst rumours and counter-rumours of the *mehallas* and their doings. The most visible signs of the results, received with jeers by the populace, were half a dozen human heads sent in by the troops as a sign of their prowess; and these I saw being strung up over the Bab el Mah'ruk—one of the main gates of the town. But on the more peaceful side were many social doings, entertainments and meals, given to

us by many of the wealthier Moors and officials—most attractive, but no room here to describe them—and counter-entertainments by ourselves to the Spanish Mission and others; also a good deal of shooting, chiefly duck and pigeon, and even a day's hawking under the leadership of the great Aissa ben Omar. We stayed much longer than we had expected, but with all the preoccupations of the Sultan it was not too easy to get him to attend to our business, and the negotiations were prolonged till the second week in June. At last, however, they were more or less completed, and with much sorrow we left our beautiful Fez and took again to the camp-life which we enjoyed so much. Only six days did our journey take this time, for we rode only as far as Larache, and continued our journey, or rather voyage, to Tangier on board H.M.S. *Diana*, the second-class cruiser which had been sent to meet us. Before the end of the month I was back at the War Office.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## A TRIP TO TURKEY.

THINGS were not at that time going well in the Balkans. Then, as ever, that hotpot of uneasy nationalities known as Macedonia was simmering, but it looked in the summer of 1909 as if it was going to boil over very shortly. Serbs, Greeks, Albanians and Bulgars, to say nothing of their Turkish masters in those regions, had acclaimed with joy the Young Turk revolution at Salonika of a year before. But their expectations of liberty under a new constitution had not been justified; and though the Sultan had been deposed, it did not look as if they would be much better off in future. The new Bulgarian kingdom began to put a fairly large finger in the pie, and Austria, Russia and Turkey were looming threateningly in the background. It was time to take a more personal interest in the matter.

Accordingly I started off in the middle of August, and travelled *viâ* Vienna, Belgrade (where I stayed for a day), per steamer through the Iron Gates and along the Danube to Cernavoda. Thence I made my way by rail to Constantza, and on by steamer to Therapia, where I was picked up by an Embassy caïque and taken ashore. Sir Gerard and Lady Lowther had very kindly offered to put me up during my stay; and there I spent a very happy ten days, making the acquaintance of numerous Turkish

big-wigs and trying to acquire as much information as I could.

Briefly put, the Young Turks were then on their trial. The revolution had been accomplished with extraordinarily little bloodshed, all things considered ; but the Young Turk leaders were inexperienced in administration and finance, and, with the best intentions of supplying a new and enlightened form of Government, were making, thanks largely to internal bickering and quarrels between the members and their partisans, a considerable hash of it. Germany also, fishing in troubled waters, was making the most of her opportunities and increasing her influence, both commercial, political and military, in every direction. This increase, in relation to ourselves, was largely due to the German policy of instructing her Embassy to develop to the utmost, with money and influence, any opening for German trade, whereas the British tradition had always been just the opposite—*i.e.*, to let the trader fight his own battles and obtain a footing by his own exertions, and then back him up if he made a success of it. Hence our British star was sinking, and the German one beginning to shine steadily, in the Turkish firmament.

My old friend Surtees (of the Coldstream), with whom I stayed for the first four days, was the Military Attaché, and thanks to his knowledge both of Turkish and of the 'ropes,' I got to know Salih Pasha (War Minister), Aziz Izzet Pasha, Mahmud Mukhtar (son of Ghazi Mukhtar of Russian War fame, whom I had known in Egypt and escorted to Aldershot a few months previously), Nazim Pasha, Ferid Damad and other soldiers, and went over some military schools and barracks and studied some forts. But the chief object for which I had come out was to study the valley of the Struma River in Western Turkey, in order to see whether the Bulgarians could, in a forthcoming campaign,



turn the Turkish flank thereby; and Surtees gladly consented to come with me.

The whole of the Corps Diplomatique was at this time *en villégiature* along the Bosphorus, and much 'social life,' in spite of the gloomy political situation, was going on. There was a good deal of excellent tennis; but best of all was the general morning swim in the extraordinarily warm water just off the shore, finishing up with cocktails on board H.M. Guardship (I fear I have forgotten her name,<sup>1</sup> though not the hospitality of her officers). Among other excursions, however—to the usual sights of Constantinople, to Moda Island, to Belgrade Forest, to the Sweet Waters (where we attended some machine-gun trials)—the most interesting one, I thought, was our visit to the ex-Sultan's 'palace' of Yildiz Kiosk.

The house itself—for it was just an ordinary country villa in size—was of no particular interest; but its contents were, for everything had been left *in statu quo*, and still showed the panic-stricken individuality of Abdul Hamid when, at dead of night, he was surrounded by his enemies and forced to abdicate at a moment's notice. There was the couch from which he had sprung, with the coverlet flung to the floor. There were the two bullet-proof waistcoats that he had grabbed at in a hurry; there, too, were forty or fifty white shirts still littering the ground where his slaves had torn open his wardrobes in order to pack for their master's hasty exile. There was his bathroom—a tiny apartment with a bath and taps the size of only an exaggerated foot-tub; it cannot have held more than half the Royal body at a time,—and sponge and bath-towel, a most personal touch, were still lying on the floor; but there was no soap. And there were also the two great safes, both locked, which had been reputed to contain a vast treasure in gold and jewels; but

<sup>1</sup> *Imogen* ?

when after much trouble they had been forced open, one was found to be completely bare, and the other—full of old and empty medicine-bottles !

The Sultan had had a most ingenious arrangement contrived in order to guard against secret thieves or assassins. The floors of all the corridors and passages were lined with loose planks under the carpets, so that however softly you stepped you were bound to be heard. There was also a caged parrot in each corridor, charged with the duty of squawking at the sight of strangers. And His Majesty had seven bedrooms, with an inclined sleeping-couch in each, so that he could spring up at a moment's notice and seize his revolver and armoured waistcoat. And you never knew which bedroom he was going to occupy. Yet in spite of all these precautions he was caught without bloodshed and sent away.

His museum was also of interest. A great long, low room, it was stuffed with every imaginable thing. Cheek by jowl with a beautiful Dresden china set and some lovely old silver plate was a case of glass eyes. There were magnificent jewel-encrusted arms, cheap French clocks, a silver model battleship, old programmes, priceless carpets and tapestries, second-hand Birmingham cutlery, &c., &c., anything you like, even addresses to him as Khalifa of the Faithful, enclosed in silver-gilt caskets and hailing from India and Ceylon. And above was a sort of glass conservatory, with a huge telescope in it wherewith to survey his subjects' doings in the capital. If a fire broke out, we were told, the fire brigade was not allowed to help until it received His Majesty's direct permission in every case, though the connection between a house on fire and a possible attack on the Sultan is not at first sight very evident.

On the evening of 1st September, Surtees and I left Constantinople by train for Serres, and here we arrived on the following evening and made arrange-

ments for driving to the Struma Valley next day. The country was quite pretty—in fact, almost lovely in some places where the Struma ran through deep gorges; but the road was atrocious, and the springs of our broken-down Victoria, drawn by two scarecrow horses, quite abominable. It was hot, too.

On the second evening, after a total drive of seventy-seven miles, we reached Juma'a i Bala, above the defiles of the Struma. There is no necessity to enter into details, but we had come to the conclusion that any big armed force trying to penetrate the gorges along this road, from either end, could be held up by quite a small force of the enemy with complete success. (Yet when it did come to a fight hereabouts, three or four years afterwards, neither side took advantage of the Struma's strategical advantages to anything like the extent of which this route was capable.)

The 'hotel' at Juma'a was a twentieth-rate article, and, in addition to many extra inhabitants in the beds and on the walls, its discomforts included only one frying-pan for all washing purposes and perfectly filthy food; so we quitted it without regrets and headed in the direction of the renowned monastery of Rilo, some twenty-five miles to the east.

Our unfortunate carriage-horses were almost exhausted before they started, and after two and a half hours over fairly level ground to Rilo village, we thought they could hardly get any farther. But a long rest and a good feed here worked wonders, and they gamely struggled up the rocky path through the forest till at length we reached the monastery towards 5 P.M. Outwardly it was not much to look at, but the inside of it was large, quaint and most interesting. We were welcomed by the Hagoumenos, but with some difficulty, as the good old priest apparently spoke nothing but Bulgarian or Greek—tongues unknown to either of

us. There was a huge courtyard in the centre, with the buildings forming a sort of fortress wall all round it; and after visiting the church and the fine library, and putting some coins on the breast of the embalmed local saint—a very holy man by all accounts, and, if I remember rightly, a martyr to the Turks—we were taken to bare but very clean guest-rooms and provided with an excellent meal.

Awakened at 3 A.M. by the great bell, we moved off before 4.30 and drove, with only a break for meals and change of horses, *viâ* Dupnitsa to Radomir. Ugly country, cold and pouring rain for the most part. At Radomir we caught the train for Sofia, and arrived there at 9.30 P.M.—a long day—to be warmly welcomed by another old friend of mine and our Minister there, Findlay, whom I had known for many months at the Agency in Cairo. Here I stayed only long enough for interviews with the friendly Chief of the Staff, General Nazlamov, and our own Military Attaché, Napier, to whom particular instructions *rê* the situation were given. And so off by the afternoon train to Vienna—more interviews there with Eardley-Russell, our Military Attaché there, and greetings to Theo Russell, whom I had known so well in Berlin. And thus home.

Whilst on the subject of Turkey, I might add that in the following spring I made the acquaintance, in England, of Enver Bey, the man who had taken a great part in engineering the Young Turk revolution of 1908. I was told off to take him down to Aldershot and show him over the camp. Never was I more surprised at a man's appearance. I had expected to meet, in accordance with the rôle he had played, a big, heavy, forceful Oriental with scowling face and savage eye—perhaps I had in my mind the 'Terrible Turk,' a heavyweight wrestler who was at that time 'downing' all our best exponents of that art. But up came a small slim man, very good-looking and beautifully turned out, with

soft voice and charming manners and an excellent knowledge of both French and German. He gave me the impression much more of a 'Society' young man, with no ideas beyond balls and dinner-parties, than of a stern revolutionary who, it was most credibly reported, had shot his own Minister of War with his own hand. He was most intelligent, too, asked me many searching questions of military detail, and finally fell in love with our newest type of Army Service Corps wagon, of which he announced his intention of ordering a large number for the Turkish Army. Shortly afterwards he was appointed Military Attaché in Berlin, whence he sent me a delightful Christmas card 'en souvenir.'

As will be remembered, he took a strong anti-Ally hand in Turkey during the Great War, and rose to high command in Asia Minor, chiefly, I think, against the Russians. He was eventually killed, in Turkestan I believe, and by his own troops, or so it was reported.

I also made the acquaintance of Talaat Bey about that time, a fellow-conspirator of Enver's. But this ex-telegraph clerk, son of a Polish gipsy, did not impress me half as much as Enver. The latter was, by the way, certainly not of pure Turkish descent. I was told he was partly Albanian, with a touch of Austrian, but I cannot vouch for it. Talaat also came later to an untimely end—assassinated.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## I LEAVE THE I.D.

THE year 1910 was to me of particular interest in two things—the death of King Edward, and my marriage. They were to a certain extent related to each other, for my fiancée, Sylvia Edwardes, was Maid of Honour to Queen Alexandra, and our wedding, fixed for 10th May, had, of course, to be postponed for a couple of months owing to the King's death on 6th May. Indeed, I still treasure a note regarding the wedding written by the King only two days before he died. To me personally his death was a heavy blow, for throughout my career His Majesty (whose godson I had the honour to be) had shown such an interest in my doings and had been so uniformly kind and helpful to me that I, if I may say so, felt almost as though I had lost a dear and personal friend.

This is not the place in which to deal with personal reminiscences of the King; but as I grew to know more and more of matters behind the scenes in which his wonderful tact and judgment in dealing with foreign—and also social and political—affairs came to light, I could not help feeling that the British world in general did not half appreciate the value to them of their sovereign, nor their loss when he died. Particularly do I remember a remark made to me by our Ambassador, Sir Frank Lascelles, in Berlin: “Why, King Edward is his own Foreign Minister—and a jolly good one too!”

Shortly before the tragic event my fiancée and myself found ourselves in Paris, she on a mission that can easily be guessed, and myself staying with old 'Fairy' (Colonel W. E. Fairholme), then Military Attaché in France. My objects were partly official and partly of a private nature, including the acceptance of a highly desirable invitation from Captain Dickson, late R.A. (and Consul at Sivas in Asia Minor), to come and fly with him. I accordingly proceeded to the new aerodrome at Mourmelon, not far from Reims, and had a most enjoyable afternoon.

In those early flying days the accommodation on the aeroplane was not exactly luxurious. The pilot sat on a little stool in front, and the passenger on another little stool close above and behind him, a knee on either side of his head and all their four legs hanging over vacancy, for the *canotage* had not then been invented, every extra pound weight being rigorously calculated. Before starting I was invited to empty my trouser-pockets, for in the position which the passenger necessarily adopted—knees almost up to chin-level—his pockets would gape, and things might fall out and get mixed up with the network of wires and the big buzzing screw behind. This had happened in one case to a large bunch of keys, with dire results: hence the precaution.

The pilot guided everything with a flimsy 'joy-stick' perpendicular lever, pushing it to various angles for nose- or tail-raising, banking, direction, &c.; and as the least touch of it in the wrong direction might cause a catastrophe, one could only pray that the pilot had a good memory and that no inconvenient gusts of wind would arise. But my trip—a most delightful sensation I thought it—was accomplished without mishap; and though we did not go much above 100 feet or farther than a mile or so, still I felt that new worlds were being con-

quered and that a glorious future in the air was opening for mankind.

Next day the Paris edition of the 'Daily Mail' had a somewhat tactless paragraph about me, saying that "Count Gleichen was seen yesterday flying at Mourmelon in company with Mademoiselle Vix of the Opéra Comique." It was perfectly true, and the lady was charming; but, as I hastened to assure my fiancée, she was Dickson's friend, not mine!

Poor Dickson came to terrible grief later on. At a flying Concours at Milan, where speed and reliability tests were being carried out, Dickson was asked by, I believe, the Prince of Turin, to go up and show off some of his fancy flying (he was then one of the best flyers existent). Dickson willingly complied, in his Farman biplane. But, most unfortunately, an Antoinette monoplane was in the air at the time. Owing to the construction of the machines, Dickson could not see upwards and the Antoinette man could not see downwards; and, as bad luck would have it, they collided and both crashed to the ground. It was a fall of only about fifty feet, but Dickson had his spine dislocated in two places, and owed his life only to the promptness of his sister, who rushed out a specialist and two nurses to his aid from England.

The Antoinette man was little damaged. But the French Government had just ordered six Antoinettes for war purposes, and when it was borne in on them that an Antoinette pilot could not see immediately below him, they cancelled the order. Upon which the Company came down on poor Dickson for damages on loss of contract, owing to his being unofficially in the air during an official race. After two years' fighting in the French courts the case was given against Dickson, and he died of his injuries shortly afterwards.

Our honeymoon in July took the form of a delightful trip in my small one-cylinder (!) De Dion



motor-car to the châteaux of Touraine, then across to Sedan and the Ardennes (which I particularly wished to see as a probable future battle-ground), finishing up with a few days in Brussels and repeated visits to the big and crowded exhibition there. Then back along those horrible *pavés* to Ostend, and thence to London, where we took up our residence in a minute flat in Burton Court. Here there was no room even for a cottage piano or a dining-room dresser, and I had to make the tiny dining-room act also as a study and a smoking-room.

My time on the General Staff was drawing to a close, and my spouse and I were somewhat nervous as to the future, for the prospect of a lengthy period on so-called 'half-pay' (really one-third pay or less) did not smile on us. But the gods were kind, and after a prolongation of my billet for about six months beyond the regulation period of four years, I was, much to my delight, 'selected' for the command of a brigade, the 15th, at Belfast. I had been in hopes that it might have been an Aldershot brigade, for, in spite of my assiduously attending manœuvres, on the umpire staff or attached to a command, or attending staff-rides in various parts of the country, it was a long time—nearly eleven years—since I had served with troops; and I felt that my military knowledge might be a trifle out of date and brushed up better at Aldershot than elsewhere. But it was not to be; and after my three years at Belfast I was bound to confess that, although Ireland might be inferior to Aldershot in a professional sense, still it was certainly much more exciting!

Before leaving the matter of my billet as A.D.M.O. 2, it may be of interest to recall a little exercise that we were set by Henry Wilson, at that time D.M.O. This was, as far as I remember, in 1911, or possibly 1910; it could not in any case have been later than April 1911. Wilson had been

in close touch with the French General Staff, and particularly with his friend Colonel Foch; and he now desired A.D.M.O.2 (myself) and A.D.M.O.3 (Money) to work out, without consulting each other, where and when the first collision between French and Germans would be likely to occur, supposing they went to war. We knew, of course, all about the German railways and platforms along the eastern frontier of Belgium, and that they could not possibly be intended for anything else than an invasion of that country. We knew also a great deal about German mobilisation and about peace and war strengths, and we reckoned (quite accurately, as it turned out) that the Germans would not leave more than two and a half corps on the Russian frontier when they 'went for' Belgium and France. We also knew what railways and roads they could use, and what their condition would probably be, and we worked it out in detail. Finally, my conclusion was that the first big clash would probably be between Montmédy and Stenay on the fourteenth day of mobilisation. Money, working from the French side, came to precisely the same conclusion, within half a day! "Very odd," said Henry Wilson, "the French General Staff have also calculated that the first big battle will be about Montmédy on the fourteenth day of mobilisation!"

This was a wonderful coincidence, but we were all three wrong. We of A.D.M.O.2 had calculated that unless the Germans threw their Landwehr into first line—which was practically impossible—they had not enough troops to move north of the Meuse as well as to attack all along the line, as we were convinced they intended to do and, in effect, did. Now, whether or not in 1911 they had perfected the organisation of their extra seven reserve corps, we knew nothing of them, nor did the French; so it is quite possible that at that period these corps did not exist. But it was, as it turned out, these seven

extra 'surprise' corps that did the trick in 1914 and enabled the Germans to make that huge turning movement north of the Meuse which, had it not been for the little B.E.F. in their way, would have rolled up the French left and maybe have altered the history of the world. What is, however, the most astonishing part of the business is that the French, having in 1911 decided that the first big attack would come through Belgium, dropped this idea altogether and adopted in 1914 their Plan 17, which depended entirely on an attempted break through of the Germans down south about Metz and Verdun.

At the King's Coronation in June I was attached to Prince Max of Baden, and did my best to pilot him through the necessary ceremonies. We had not met since we had played together as children in Karlsruhe in 1874; I remember being slightly haughty to him in those days, as he was nearly two years younger than I. I now found him a charming, tall, good-looking fellow, with a pretty (though rather shy) wife and broad liberal principles. He would eventually have succeeded his cousin Fritz as Grand Duke of Baden, and had, as I knew, been over to England several times to study our economic and industrial ways; indeed, during the few days he was here then, he asked me to help him in seeing certain power-works, and knew much more about our Poor Law than I did myself. He was, at the end of the War, as everyone now knows, put into a hopeless position as Chancellor, which post he only accepted from a strict sense of duty; and when, being badly let down by Ludendorff and Co.'s cold feet, he started peace negotiations with America, his actions were promptly disowned by Ludendorff, whose feet had by this time almost recovered their normal circulation. His 'Memoirs' are most pathetic reading, giving us the impression of a high-minded gentleman struggling with adversity, abused and found fault with on all sides, yet

doing his best, even when seriously ill, to deal with an extremely complicated and dangerous situation. One cannot help feeling that, had he been a stronger and more brutal character, he would have dealt with it more successfully. As it was, he faded into the background and died only a year or so after his 'Memoirs' were published.

Those were the days of the German invasion scare, and of Lord Roberts' appeal for conscription instead of voluntary service. As regards the latter, I can only express my strong opinion that if we had had conscription in force for three or four years before 1914 there would have been no Great War. Germany's contempt for our little army was always such that in her estimation of the chances of a great Continental war it would hardly have counted at all—could, in fact, be left out of all calculation. But if, like themselves, we had been able to mobilise a couple of million trained and armed men within a few days, her view as regards a declaration of war, with the possibility of finding us on the other side, would have been expressed in the phrase 'Not good enough!' Hence, according to my ideas, Britain *was* largely, though, of course, indirectly, responsible for the outbreak. Whether, in 1910 or thereabouts, we could have adopted conscription for the first time without the danger of precipitating the very thing we were most anxious to avoid is, of course, another question; there would, I admit, in the then tension between the two countries have been considerable danger.

But in a peace-time 'out-of-the-blue' German invasion of England I could never believe. Putting politics altogether on one side, German mentality was, in my opinion, entirely against such a novel operation, and, in addition, the Germans were physically incapable of embarking large masses of troops without our knowing all about it long before the first man had stepped aboard. The invasion of

England would have been a most hazardous enterprise which would not have appealed to the German military (or civilian) mind at all; it would have conflicted with all their most deep-rooted principles—*i.e.*, never to commit yourself to an enterprise without the most thorough preparation beforehand and without the practical certainty that your attempt would be successful. “Once we were landed in England,” said the wise old Moltke when the idea was mooted to him, “how should we get out again?” And on the few occasions on which the subject came up for discussion when I was in Berlin, the whole-hearted ridicule which was poured on it by German officers was, I felt, perfectly genuine. They had had one small experience in China during the Boxer troubles in 1900, and they did not like it. The ships which carried their small volunteer force and stores to Tientsin had been most abominably loaded; all the things they did not want for some time were on top, and all the immediate necessities were at the bottom of the holds, so that for the first few days they had to exist on the charity of the other international troops. My readers may also remember a most interesting and ingenious little book that appeared about the beginning of the century called ‘The Riddle of the Sands,’ by that clever crank, Erskine Childers, who later in Ireland paid the penalty of his wrongheadedness with his life. It described the secret embarking of vast masses of German troops along the sands and shores of Friesland, and gave chapter and verse. Though we of the D.M.O. did not believe such a movement was possible, we thought it was as well to make certain, and we sent a couple of experts over to see. Their report completely confirmed our views: it was physically impossible. The want of railways and roads, the shallowness of the water, the configuration of the coast, not to mention the terrific amount of preparation of wharves, landing-places, causeways, sheds

and what-not besides, would have rendered a secret embarkation quite impossible. Troops could, of course, have been embarked at Hamburg, Bremen and elsewhere; but the huge number of transports and the preliminary preparations required could not respectively have been collected and carried out without the whole world knowing of them. Even if the armada had at last put to sea, the state of mind of officers and men, embarked on an entirely novel and most dangerous-looking enterprise, in all respects quite contrary to their landsman principles, can well be imagined as not making for success.

But the possibility of a German invasion had been seriously and officially put forward over here, and there was a most important Committee of Imperial Defence sitting on it; so I was haled before them, as being fairly recently from Berlin, to give evidence on the question.

Lord Haldane, then War Minister, had kindly let me know the line of examination he was going to take, and I had thought over and written out the sort of answers I would give. I had, of course, talked the matter over with Ewart, then D.M.O., and told him of my views. But he did not at all agree with them. He was evidently apprehensive of a possible invasion, and thought that I might produce a wrong impression on the Committee; so, after arguments on both sides, he warned me to be very careful in what I said, and not to speak too strongly. But when face to face with this most imposing body, comprising the Prime Minister, Mr Asquith, Lord Grey, Lord Crewe, Lord Haldane, Mr Balfour, besides General Nicholson, C.I.G.S., and Lord Roberts and his henchman for the purpose, Charles Repington, most of them practically determined that an invasion *was* possible, and perhaps probable, I felt distinctly overawed. Somewhat foolishly—for my ‘gift of the gab’ is decidedly poor—instead of sticking to and reading the answers

I had prepared, I answered my questioners *viva voce*; I had to, indeed, for they propounded some conundrums to which I had no written answer. I did not speak well, and did not, in this august assembly and with Ewart's warning still sounding in my ear, emphasise my views on the subject half as strongly as I should have liked—in fact, I did not dare to do so; but I know I left the impression on them that I, for one, was not a believer in the fashionable bogey.

Lord Haldane also, I think, was an unbeliever; but he had noticed that I was not happy under examination, and perhaps not always quite consistent in my remarks. So a day or two afterwards he asked me to luncheon—alone. Anyone who has enjoyed the hospitality of Lord Haldane knows what an excellent cook he had, and what super-excellent cigars (he always smoked twelve enormous ones a day, he told me). His conversation during the meal was, as usual, delightfully cosmopolitan; but over the coffee and cigars he skilfully worked it round to the C.I.D. meeting, and, almost before I knew it, I was pouring out my inmost thoughts to him on the subject of invasion: which was, of course, what he had asked me to luncheon for.

I always had the greatest regard for Lord Haldane. My first acquaintance with him dated from a stalking visit in the 'nineties to (the late) Lord Tweedmouth's Highland house at Guisachan. He was then the eminent K.C., Mr Haldane, M.P., and amongst other things he delighted me with a detailed account of a case in which he had just figured. It was a case concerning explosives, and his mastery of the chemical details and clear exposition of the reasons why one explosive was successful and the other was not filled me with admiration and respect. And although his figure was most decidedly not that of an athlete and he did not stalk, he used

to go for long swift walks and climbs which I should hardly have thought possible to him. But he was nothing like so old as he looked.

His acceptance of the Secretaryship of State for War in 1905 was the beginning of a 'clear-thinking' era for the War Office, and never did we have a better War Minister. The General Staff and other main branches were put on an excellent correlative footing, overlapping and gaps disappeared, the Militia and Volunteers vanished and reappeared as fourteen divisions of Territorials, the B.E.F. of six infantry (and one cavalry) divisions was formed, and lo! we had a modern up-to-date and thoroughly-trained voluntary army; whilst the Minister of War's visits to Germany and close acquaintanceship with the Kaiser, although looked at askance by many, gave Lord Haldane a very good idea of what the Germans were up to. I should have loved to see the little incident at Windsor when his Lordship, after a conversation with the Emperor lasting up to 2 A.M., was awakened from his slumbers at 7 A.M. by a heavy knocking at the door. In answer to his sleepy "Come in!" in marched a huge Kaiserjäger, steel helmet and all, who stood to attention and barked out that the Emperor wished to see him at once in order to continue the conversation of the previous evening. Lord Haldane, so he told me, was not allowed to dress, but had then and there to roll out of bed in his pyjamas, huddle on a dressing-gown and slippers and toddle down the corridors behind the Kaiserjäger in order to obey the behests of the Imperial tyrant.

During the War he was most unfairly and cruelly treated by the British public. His unfortunate confession, made many years before the war, that Germany was his "spiritual home," was, with many unfair expansions, untruths and abuse, brought up against him, and, without the smallest foundation,



he was dubbed a traitor by many persons who ought to have known better. Though much hurt, he accepted the position with the utmost calm, saying philosophically that people would know better in time. And they did. But his death was a heavy loss to England.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## BELFAST.

I ARRIVED in Belfast towards the end of July 1911, and before I had been there a month was somewhat startled by a secret wire from London, "Be prepared to mobilise at short notice." The political skies were fairly blue at the moment, and there were no serious clouds on the horizon. What on earth did it mean? It was cancelled next day; but to this moment I have never known what it portended. Anyhow, we proceeded to the Curragh in the following week for brigade-training.

My four battalions at that period were the 1st Cheshires at Belfast, 2nd K.O.S.B.'s at Holywood (the other side of Belfast Lough), 1st Manchesters at Mullingar (in the centre of Ireland) and the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers at Londonderry—a fairly scattered command. At first I felt rather like a bewildered hen with four very efficient ducklings, but my Brigade-Major, Tyndall (strangely like my good-looking friend of past days, poor Aubrey M'Mahon), was a first-rate man and quickly put me up to the ropes, so that we got through brigade-training and other matters without mishap, except that I twisted my knee in climbing on to a big horse, got water on it and was more or less laid up by it for four months.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I might add that although five doctors (three army and two civilian ones) kept tinkering at it, they did it no good at all. Finally, the despised of doctors, Herbert Barker the osteopathist, cured it completely in four minutes.

The brigade, by the way, had some difficulty in getting back from the Curragh, as there was a bad strike on the Irish railways; but with this I could not deal, for I was at the time lying flat on my back in the house of my excellent old friends of Egypt days, the Arthur Jacobs (of the 20th Hussars).

The country round Belfast was ever so much prettier than I had expected. We took a little house called Hartfell just outside the town in Fort William Park, though there was neither fort nor park thereabouts. And from the hill on which we were situated there were lovely wide views, across the Lough and County Down to our (southern) front, and towards Cave Hill and along the Lough shore of County Antrim to the left. The Shaftesburys lived only a mile or two beyond us at Belfast Castle, but were not often there. Beyond them, ten miles away at Antrim Castle, were the Massereenes, who often gave us of their kind hospitality; and twenty-two miles or so from us, at Glenarm on the sea-coast of the county, lived the Antrims, already great friends of ours, who were more than kind during the whole of our stay. We spent, indeed, many week-ends there, enjoying not only the company of our delightful hosts but also the fishing, of which there were both trout and salmon in the little Glenarm River. Lord Antrim was a great farmer, with much contempt for Irish ways and a correspondingly high opinion of the Scots, his family (the M'Donnells) hailing originally from the Western Isles. He was also the most amusing of story-tellers I have ever met, and a great 'character' besides, outspoken and unconventional to a degree, but possessed of the warmest heart and friendliest feelings to all mankind, except to humbugs. One story about him is very characteristic. The reporter of a very respectable Belfast newspaper sought an interview with him one day. "I have been told, my Lord, a most outrageous story about your Lord-

ship, and I should like your Lordship's personal authority to contradict it. They say, indeed, that your Lordship was seen the other day in Belfast, yourself driving a herd of bullocks through the streets of the town. Have I your Lordship's permission to contradict this dreadful story?" "Certainly you have," responded Lord Antrim; "they were not bullocks—they were heifers."

We rapidly made acquaintance with the local big-wigs and 'leading families' of and round Belfast. Mr M'Mordie was then Mayor of Belfast—a shrewd little Northerner, full of common-sense and a great stand-by in case of trouble; his death two years later was a great loss to the town. Harland & Wolff's, with Lord Pirrie at the head, and Workman & Clarke's, the former employing about 15,000 workmen and the latter 5000 or more, were, of course, the two great shipbuilding firms, with works along the Lough side and down Queen's Road, just across the Lough bridge. Great linen manufacturers there were too, Sir Robert Anderson and many others; and rope-works, and tobacco-works, and aerated water and ginger-ale factories—and many besides. It was, indeed, an industrial town on a big scale, and the numerous branches of the Richardsons, the Wilsons, the Crawfords, the Craigs, the Torrens's, the Clarkes, &c., occupied houses, some large and some small, but nearly all standing in their own grounds, within a mile or two of the city. There was a fine Town Hall, and Queen's University, and a Protestant Cathedral, and other big buildings; but beyond Royal Avenue, Donegal Street and the central 'show' parts of the town the streets were slummy, neglected and congested, chiefly inhabited—at least such is the impression left on my mind—by sullen-looking men and women loafing at the street corners, and crowds of ragged noisy little boys yelling to each other or at the passer-by in a totally incomprehensible lingo. I remember being sur-

rounded once by half a dozen of these imps yelling at me, "Wah's tarm?" And as I comprehended them not, they shouted angrily and all the louder, "Wah's tarm?" the leader of them irritably stamping his foot at me. Eventually I discovered that these infants wished to know what o'clock it was; so I told them, and they disappeared without a word of thanks. Shortly after our arrival, too, at Hartfell, I found that we had an unnecessary number of large iron garden-seats in the garden. So, posing as a public benefactor, I put two of them outside the gate on the very steep road which led past our entrance. Within forty-eight hours they were both smashed to smithereens! No, the lower classes in Belfast were decidedly not attractive; but all the same they must have had a hidden sense of the beautiful, for they were always stealing our flowers.

The Roman Catholic quarter of the town was down towards the south-west, Shankill Road and Falls Road being the most frequent scenes of disturbances. For both Catholic and Protestant cemeteries lay in this direction, and it was the pleasing habit of the Catholics—and also of the Protestants—when relations were strained, as they often were, to throw stones at each other's funerals on their way to the corpses' last respective resting-places. The Catholics were, of course, in a small minority in the town, forming barely one quarter of the population, but that did not prevent an almost mediæval hatred from simmering between the exponents of the two faiths; and as all the Protestants were loyalists to the Crown, and practically all the Catholics were Nationalists and Home Rulers, their vehement differences in politics were intensified by the loathing with which each party regarded the religious faith of the other. It will hardly be believed, indeed, the extent to which this religious hatred was, in this twentieth century, carried into the private lives and social orderings of the people

of Ulster in general and Belfast in particular. No Protestant family, for instance, dared employ a Roman Catholic servant, for fear of being boycotted by their friends. I remember, indeed, the case of a Protestant gun-maker who was obliged by his customers to discharge an excellent Catholic assistant, and presented him with £20 to soothe his wounded feelings; but this did not prevent his receiving many letters from other Catholics threatening him with death, so that he had always to carry a revolver in his pocket! In Antrim town, too, a worthy Catholic started a club, irrespective of religion, for the young men of the town, and he was boycotted by his co-religionists until he got rid of all the Protestants. In the country also the same sort of thing went on; and in many cases when a Protestant farm was put up for sale it was bought, irrespective of the price, by Roman Catholics who thereupon, at a largely reduced rent, sublet it to one of their own co-religionists, thus gradually increasing Catholic hold on the land.

It is worth while glancing at past records in order to see the reason for all this, and we must remember that of all people the Irish, both North and South, are most tenacious of their country's history.

The Protestant planters had been established by James I. in Ulster for barely thirty years when a whirlwind of Roman Catholic hate and fury swept down on them in 1641. Isolated farms and houses were plundered and burnt, the crops laid waste and the inhabitants massacred. Whole villages were depopulated, and men, women and children were stripped naked in the bitter winter and driven with blows from their homes. That was the first memory.

In 1649 the balance swung round, and Cromwell's deeds and ruthless destruction of everything Catholic, together with the forfeiture of their lands, the settlement of the same by English Puritans and adventurers, and the expulsion of the natives, gentle and

kern alike, to the wilds and bogs of the West, have left a bloody imprint on the minds of the Roman Catholics which centuries will not efface.

Twelve years later, under the weathercock rule of Charles II., the Catholics began to lift up their heads once more, only to be crushed again twenty years later in 1681.

James II. raised their hopes to the zenith in 1686, and for three years the Protestant inhabitants of the North cowered under the ever-increasing power of the Catholics, and shivered at the news of their outrages in the South, until the valiant defence of 'Derry put a heart into them; and James' star began to sink.

1690 and 1691 were the years when the Irish Catholics, severely defeated by William III. at the Boyne, fought for their lives at Limerick, Athlone and Aughrim in a savage war of hatred and retaliation. In the end they were heavily beaten and their armies destroyed, and the flower of their gentry was driven abroad to seek a living under foreign standards. Protestantism was triumphant, and the Treaty of Limerick was signed—but not kept.

It is difficult to speak temperately of the manner in which Ireland—*i.e.*, Catholic Ireland—was treated by the British Government throughout the eighteenth century. Outrageous laws were passed against the Catholics; they were crushed, robbed and driven from their lands, their property was confiscated, their religion was forbidden, their priests persecuted, their industries ruined. Driven at length to desperation, the peasantry turned to brigandage and 'Whiteboydom' in the South, whilst in the North the Catholic Hearts of Steel boys were opposed by the Protestant Oakboys, and gruesome retaliatory quarrels and worse were the order of the day in Ulster.

In 1782 fighting broke out again, and was but little lulled by the formation of the 'Society of United Irishmen' in the following year—a loyal,

broad-minded and well-meaning body composed in the first instance of Protestant Ulstermen. Encouraged by the existence of the Society, 'Peep o' Day' boys carried out their matutinal depredations in the hunt for concealed Roman Catholic arms, whilst the Catholics retaliated by forming bands of 'Defenders,' who committed a few frightful atrocities and in other ways rivalled the deeds of the Peep o' Day boys.

By 1792 matters had, partly through coercion and partly through conciliation, quietened down a good deal. So moderate was the feeling in the North that Reform Associations were actually formed in Protestant Belfast for the purpose of enfranchising Roman Catholics! The movement was carried on by the Protestant Wolfe Tone and Napper Tandy and others, who advocated the fusion of northern Protestant Radicals with Roman Catholics in the ranks of the 'United Irishmen.'

This appears to have been the high-water mark of toleration. The 'Defenders' again became aggressive, and when threatened with suppression by the Government took refuge with the 'United Irishmen' Society, thus causing it to lose its *raison d'être*, and filling its ranks, much against the will of its leaders, with disaffected Catholics.

In 1795 further heavy fighting took place in Ulster, notably at the Diamond in Armagh, where the 'Defenders' lost some forty-eight men killed (September). Orange Lodges were thereupon reconstituted for the purpose of keeping order, but appear gradually to have drifted into the position of a society for the suppression or expulsion of Roman Catholics, whilst the 'United Irishmen' gradually became the party of the Catholics and of the disaffected of all parties.

1797 saw the enforcement of coercion and the suppression of the 'United Irishmen' and their paper in Belfast. Ulster became much agitated,



spies and informers were rife, innocent men (such as Orr of Belfast) were hanged, the Yeomanry (all Protestants) began committing a variety of outrages in the name of law and order, and events culminated in the rising of 1798.

In the South and West the rebellion, engineered by Lord E. Fitzgerald, Bond, Neilson, Sheares, &c., was of a most formidable character. But in the North the conspirators, all earnest and respectable men, succeeded but poorly. The rising in Ulster was short and violent, and was over in a week. On 7th June H. J. M'Cracken was beaten by General Nugent (Belfast) at the fierce little battle of Antrim, and at Ballynahinch a few days later a camp of the insurgents was attacked and dispersed by Barber (from Downpatrick) in co-operation with Nugent.

Since the Union in 1800 Ulster has prospered, and has found her firm trust in the Union to be her best guarantee of prosperity. Yet the old religious antagonism, sharpened by history and tradition, remains. True to their Scottish blood and jealous of any interference with their religion, the main body of Protestant Ulstermen—Presbyterian for the most part—watched with the acutest suspicion the gradual resuscitation and growth of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland and its successful efforts to exert temporal power and influence over the chaotic mass of the tangled politics of the country. Where there were 5955 priests in 1861 to a Roman Catholic population of 4,505,000, there were in 1911 14,145 priests to a Roman Catholic population of 3,309,000, giving a rise in the percentage of priests to Catholics of .11 to .43. Ireland was, in fact, honeycombed with priesthood.

The Roman Catholic Church, true to its principles of grasping temporal power in order to extend its spiritual influence—some say that cause and effect are reversed in truth—had for many years past thrown in its lot with the Nationalists in order to

bring the people in all their dealings under its sway. The priests had now the completest control over the education and maintenance of the children and over the private lives of the Catholic community. They influenced the politics of their flocks by bringing ecclesiastical pressure to bear on them in the direction of Home Rule, and in that of general though quiet opposition to Protestantism. Yet when Home Rule was fairly in sight the upper hierarchy of the Catholic Church was terrified, for it found that it had over-reached itself and was in danger, through the likelihood—nay, certainty—of undenominational education being introduced under a Home Rule Parliament, of losing all control over the education and bringing up of the children. Yet it could not throw the weight of its power against Home Rule, for in that case there would have been a revolt of the Nationalists against the Church, and the whole of the latter's work would have been undone. It had, therefore, a double and a delicate part to play, and could express itself strongly on neither side.

It was hardly to be expected that with this gradual increase of Roman Catholic influence, and with Home Rule looming in the background, the tough Protestants of Ulster would take no steps to counteract the dangers to liberty and loyalism that they foresaw so clearly; and for years they had been gradually organising to make head against Home Rule. The Orange Society, so-called, of course, in memory of William III., had been in existence for many years, and it now became the nucleus of the movement, which included large numbers of Unionist clubs as well.

It is of interest to note here that the Orange Society was a secret and thoroughly loyalist society, not merely a league, and was composed only of Protestant men of good repute and good morals. Members were admitted only on the personal recommendation of other members, and had to produce

certificates of good character before they were balloted for. Not only were not all Unionists Orangemen, but the society was a comparatively small one, numbering perhaps 80,000 altogether in the whole of Ireland, besides others outside it. 28,000 of them lived in and round Belfast (of which the total population was close on 400,000). They were distributed in Lodges, with regular meeting-places and programmes of work.

The Unionist clubs, on the other hand, were by no means such a select body, and in the remoter country districts they had been only quite lately in process of organisation. Even here, however, the riff-raff was scrupulously excluded, and the very large proportion were decent respectable men. Their President, Lord Templetown, informed me in February 1912 that they then numbered about 160,000, including perhaps 40,000 Orangemen. There were already numbers of rifles in the country; but their hiding-places were kept most secret, and were only known to a few men in authority. The men themselves had not yet been armed or properly trained.

This, then, was the situation in Ulster when I arrived at Belfast in 1911. It was full of interesting possibilities, including that of civil war, and I did my best to study it. Personally I arrived with an open mind, quite ready to be convinced on either side, but with my ideas tending, as far as they might, in the direction of some scheme of devolution—as was then the fashion, the somewhat idealist creation, I believe, of Lord Dunraven—or of modified Home Rule. After I had been there a year my ideas, as might be expected, solidified in opposition to Home Rule in any form for, at all events, the North of the country; but equally, of course, I had officially no opinion on the matter at all.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

BELFAST, 1912-1913.

THE most important event in early 1912 was undoubtedly the Winston Churchill episode ; but whilst this was crystallising, a waft of beauty was brought into the town by the arrival of Anna Pávlova and her troupe of graceful dancers. I went to see her behind the scenes about the fourth night after her arrival, and found the little lady in a great state of indignation, for the theatre was only about a quarter full, in consequence of Puritan Belfast having decreed that hers was a most improper and indecent show, and was on no account to be encouraged ! She vowed that, after her week was up, she would never come there again, and she never did. But she gave me some flowers from her bouquet with a most charming gesture, and promised to bring some members of her troupe to tea with me. They arrived on the following day, but, owing to my wife unfortunately being in England and to my being unable to produce a single inhabitant of Belfast who could talk French, I had to entertain them by myself ; and I took them to Belfast Castle to see the view, though it was not improved by the melting snow which lay on the landscape. Poor dear little lady, with her wonderful grace, her beautiful little body and her charming and modest manners, Art has indeed suffered a heavy loss in her recent death.

We used, by the way, to make a point of enter-

taining members of the more attractive companies that visited Belfast during our stay, amongst others the 'Peter Pan' company (I have a vivid memory not only of Pauline Chase but also of a ripping little boy who played 'Michael') and Harry Lauder. The Lauders were old friends of my wife, and I well remember the rejoinder of Sir Harry to a remark of mine that I was much looking forward to the pleasure of hearing him that evening for the first time.

"What! ye've never hairrd me before? O *man*, what a peety!"

Whilst on the subject of social life in Belfast, I might add that, although there were one or two theatres in the town, there were only two restaurants, and of these the chief one had no wine licence and closed every evening at eight. No, it was not exactly a deliriously exciting town from the point of view of gaiety, whatever it may have been from another standpoint.

Mr Winston Churchill had been invited by the Ulster Liberal Association, a small and inoffensive body, to address them on the 8th of February, and the Ulster Hall was quite innocently secured by the secretary for the purpose. At once uprose strong protests from the more fiery Unionists, furious at the proposed desecration of Ulster's holy of holies by the renegade son of the very man who had in that very hall addressed a meeting in 1893 against the then Home Rule Bill, and had given vent to the memorable words that if the Bill passed, "Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right!"

The hall was promptly secured by the Orangemen for the previous night, and the intention was to fill it full and hold it against all comers on the following day. Arrangements were made for kidnapping, or rather blockading, all police officers at a given moment, and it was even whispered that there were designs against myself as well!

The terrified Liberal Association at once gave up their claim, and, after some difficulty in finding a meeting-place, pitched a large tent on the Celtic Park Football Ground for Churchill's meeting.

Finding myself about the only person in some authority with no axe to grind, I communicated with the Roman Catholic Bishop, Tohill, a man of some character, with the Liberal Association, with one or two Nationalists in authority, and with the chiefs of the Unionists, Lord Londonderry and Colonel Wallace (Grand Master of the Orangemen)—all with a view to getting them to restrain their different flocks from making disturbances on the day. From all of these, except the Unionists, I got assurances that they would do their best. I was much disconcerted at receiving a polite note from Lord Londonderry<sup>1</sup> saying that he regretted he could not meet me on the matter. I caught, however, Colonel Wallace, but he would not promise anything. At last he said that if I would guarantee the presence of a large number of troops he would see what he could do. I guaranteed him 3500; but he did not move until they arrived on the 6th. Then he got to work.

There was more method in this than I suspected at the time. The fact was that the Unionist chiefs refused to give any guarantee or promise for this reason, that they thought that if Dublin Castle were to hear that the Orangemen had promised to keep order, they (the Castle) would countermand the troops coming and would throw the whole blame of any disturbances which might occur on to the Orangemen. Hence they waited.

The troops arrived on the 6th and were distributed, four battalions and a squadron in Victoria Barracks and three battalions at Holywood. Elaborate instructions, in co-operation with the police,

<sup>1</sup> With whom I had been shooting at Mount Stuart only a month before.

were drawn up for their movements and placing (three battalions and a squadron at Celtic Park, and four battalions lying doggo at different points in the town).

The great day passed off in peace. It poured with rain the whole time; the Celtic Park surroundings were flooded and almost deserted; the tent itself was barely two-thirds full, whilst tickets were sold far below price and many were given away for nothing. The elaborate precautions, indeed, appeared hardly necessary. I was, however, afterwards informed by the police that had the troops not been there the tent would have been rushed. As it was, the Unionists had a special telephone wire from the tent, and I was told that it was intended, had Churchill made any offensive remarks, to move down masses of men and block all exits, thus imprisoning Churchill, his audience and my three battalions! (Whether this was true or not I do not know; if so, the Unionists had, I think, reckoned without the four hidden battalions, with whom I was in telephonic communication.)

Churchill brought his wife to the meeting. Their car had to pass through hostile crowds in Royal Avenue, &c., and was partly lifted off the ground more than once. Had it not been for Mrs Churchill's presence, it would pretty certainly have been upset. On the return journey to the station from their hotel they started twenty minutes sooner than had been given out, and a posse of dockyard men arrived at the station to find the birds flown.

Hardly was the episode over before I had to rush to London, for my dear mother was desperately ill, and she died three days afterwards.

On the 9th April, two days before the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, a huge Unionist demonstration took place at Balmoral, and was addressed by Mr Bonar Law, Sir Edward Carson and other Unionists of note. The meeting was most impres-

sive, and the staff work in getting the thousands of men on to and off the ground was extraordinarily good, especially the detraining. (I calculated that at the ordinary rate of marching there should have been 146,620; but Captain Frank Hall, the staff organiser, reckoned them at not more than 115,000.) No disturbances occurred.

The Home Rule Bill was introduced on the 11th April, and accepted by the Nationalist Convention at Dublin on the 23rd of the same month. At this latter demonstration the Guarantee Committee had to pay a deficit of £1700 to the railway companies as compensation for special trains which were run from all parts of Ireland but contained hardly any 'patriots' at all!

On the 9th May the second reading of the Bill was carried by 372 to 271, and thereafter the British public again sank into apathy.

But not so the Ulster Unionists. The Unionist Council, having elected Sir Edward Carson as their leader, began to act with energy. Plans were inaugurated throughout Ulster, and later in England and Scotland, for the purpose of arousing opposition to the 'iniquitous' measure, and speeches were delivered to crowded audiences in which it became more and more apparent that the North was organising itself, and that it meant to offer organised opposition to any authority that tried to force Home Rule on Ulster.

The Unionist clubs were overhauled and put in order; rifles were imported in thousands into the country; and it was given out that on the definite and final passing of the Bill a Provisional Government would be declared. No secrecy was made of the Unionist intentions.

Meanwhile the only disturbances which took place were those which occurred in July 1912, and a smaller row in September of the same year—a fight between two football clubs, one Roman Catholic, the



other Protestant, on the Celtic Park ground, to which latter no further reference need be made.

The July disturbances arose in the shipyards, in consequence of the 'Castledawson outrage.' A few days before, a small body of Protestant school-children on a holiday excursion at this village (near Dungannon) had come into collision with a Nationalist procession on the road; the latter had seized some of the little Union Jacks which the children were waving, and bruised and upset some of them and their teachers. Serious bodily damage was not apparently sustained by anyone, but the news caused a ferment in Belfast, to which town many of the children belonged.

On the 23rd July a Catholic workman at the shipyards, who was reported to have been one of the aggressors (but was not), was set upon by a crowd of Unionist workmen and nearly killed. Two or three others were damaged, and the police and troops were called out by the Lord Mayor on receipt of a message from the Commissioner of the Harbour Police that "a serious riot was taking place." On the arrival of the troops, however, there was nothing to be seen of a 'riot.' Thousands of good-humoured workmen greeted the troops with cheers and the police with booing. The fact, however, remained that a number of Catholics had been attacked, and pickets were mounted in the Queen's Road during that day and intermittently for about three weeks afterwards. Few actual assaults took place, but the Catholics were eventually all terrorised into leaving—to the number of about 700, and distress and want became apparent in their families. After a week the unrest began to quiet down, and the Catholics began to come back; and *then*, and not till then, did the 'Castle' put itself in a state of fuss about the matter, magnified the events largely and, in spite of my assuring them that it was quite unnecessary, insisted on sending another battalion to

Belfast, the H.L.I. from Mullingar. They were not allowed to depart for a fortnight. Had they been sent in the first two days, they might have been of some use in relieving the Cheshires and K.O.S.B.'s; but, as it was, they were not in the least required, except as occasional reliefs.

The most notable event in the following month was the signing of the Covenant on the 28th September, by which some 218,206 men and almost a like number (232,000) of women, headed by Carson and the Council, bound themselves not to accept a Home Rule Parliament, but to resort to arms, if necessary, to oppose it. It was preceded by solemn church services, and followed by another 'campaign' in Ulster, in which Carson was rapturously received by the multitudes, mounted escorts being formed for him, and clubs in their hundreds turning out to be 'inspected' by him and to welcome him.

The militant movement was now fairly started. Working as quietly as may be, the organisation of the Unionist clubs was made use of in order to start an 'Ulster Volunteer Force' on a really military footing. A system of battalions was laid down, the country was divided up into districts and sub-districts, and recruits came pouring in, whole portions of the clubs enlisting together. A signalling and despatch-rider corps was formed and distributed, and a few local mounted bodies came into existence as volunteer cavalry. No artillery had yet been formed, but it was believed that there were a few machine-guns with certain units. The total number enrolled up to the middle of November 1913 must have been quite 90,000, and it was stated that there were sufficient rifles in the country to arm the whole of them. As to this latter question, the supply of rifles was, as above-mentioned, kept quite secret, and was only known to a few men. Even the battalion commanders did not yet know where the rifles for their men were stored. A number of Italian

rifles—long in the barrel, weak-looking and costing only five francs apiece (including belt, bayonet and scabbard!)—were seized in England, Belfast and elsewhere during the spring and summer of 1913. But I was assured (with what truth I know not) by one of the 'few men' above referred to that these were not the genuine article, and that none of the real ones had yet been seized. He informed me further that there were over 50,000 rifles in the country in June, and I believe he was telling the truth. These rifles were converted Lee-Metfords, taking Government ammunition.

Otherwise the year 1913 was extraordinarily quiet; there were no disturbances, not even on the 12th July, the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, nor on the date of the second and third reading by the House of Commons (majority 110) of the Home Rule Bill on the 16th January and 7th July. The Lords rejected it on the 15th July. On the 24th September the 'Provisional Government' was sanctioned by the Unionist Council, and on 'Ulster Day,' as the 28th September was now termed (or rather, the 27th that year), there was a big parade of Belfast volunteers—fourteen battalions numbering over 15,000 men—before Sir Edward Carson at Balmoral; and this was followed by further 'campaigns' in England and Scotland. The names of the men in authority in the Provisional Government, including those in the departments to be formed of finance, military matters, taxation, education, &c., &c., were published at this time; and a further great meeting of the business-men of Ulster, representing a capital of £145,000,000 (*not* including Harland & Wolff, though they were almost to a man Unionists, with the exception of their head, Lord Pirrie), held on the 28th October in the Ulster Hall, gave the Government further 'to think.' But with these exceptions little was visible on the surface; military and political organisation and the drawing

up of plans of action and details of future administration went steadily forward, and the people became daily more solidified in determination and grim earnestness. All over the country one heard instances of self-sacrificing actions; everywhere recruits were pouring in, demanding to be drilled and walking miles, after their work, once or twice a week to attend the parades and drills. Some had reached the 'extended order' stage of drill, and nearly all had done a certain amount of firing, both on real and miniature ranges, though the rifles in use were but few. But throughout the land there reigned a stern and disciplined atmosphere and a serious spirit of unity and organisation.

These men were not of the ordinary type of Irishmen. Nine-tenths of them had Scottish blood in them, with a certain mixture of English here and there. They were not a very pleasant people to meet. Stubborn, harsh and dour, with few manners and no sense of humour, they yet appealed to one owing to their unyielding spirit and their savage hatred of every compatriot who was not a loyalist.

Wherever one went one found organisation and drill hand in hand. The large landowners, almost to a man Unionists, and many of them ex-officers of the Regulars or late Militia, peers and commoners, rich men or well-to-do farmers, held local meetings and enrolled nearly all their men in the Volunteer force. They went round their properties night after night, superintending the organisation and attending at the drill-halls to see that all was going well. Some had given up their parks to batches of men for a week or more's training at a time. The wife of one of the big owners told me at the end of 1913 that for the last two or three months she had not seen her husband during the day-time except on Sundays, and that night after night he returned almost exhausted from his rounds. During the summer, if one went for an after-dinner walk, as I

have often done, one would hear voices and words of command ; and looking over the hedge one would see small bodies of men drilling in the fields in the dark. On most of the properties men who did not join the force were looked at askance and given the cold shoulder. The small anti-Carson meeting of Protestants and others which was held on 24th October 1913 at Ballymoney, and at which certain doubtless sincere gentlemen (such as Captain White, Mr Alec Wilson, Sir Roger Casement and others) spoke, urging their hearers to refrain from joining the Unionist movement, gave pleasure to the Government, and was held up as an example of what the genuine patriots of Ulster really desired. But it was promptly answered by the overwhelming meeting of business men already referred to, and the promoters of the Ballymoney meeting were curtly informed by former friends that their room was preferable to their company.

Nor was the situation improved by His Holiness the Pope launching a couple of thunderbolts about this time in the shape of the 'Ne temere' and 'Motu proprio' Bulls. The first of these, concerning mixed marriages in Ireland, which the law of the land had declared valid, declared them null and void in the sight of the Church of Rome, and the offspring thereof as illegitimate. The second—of less outward importance—declared that any Catholic who, without ecclesiastical authority, summoned a priest to give evidence at any lay tribunal, was *ipso facto* excommunicated. Public opinion in Ulster had already been excited about one or two cases in connection with the former, and it was widely recognised that the latter Bull was one step further in the direction of the complete Romanisation of Ireland. So that relations between the two faiths were hardly improved thereby.

This is not the place to discuss at any length the question of Home Rule ; but I may say that in

the course of my inquiries I became convinced that it was the Irish politician, and not the Irish farmer, who wanted Home Rule. The farmer or peasant, for the first time in Irish history, had, under George Wyndham's Land Purchase Act of 1903, succeeded in obtaining and owning land—his heart's desire—on very easy terms. The pity of it was that this Act did not go far enough to satisfy its own popularity, and to provide enough money for the land-owners anxious to sell and the tenants anxious to buy. It could, however, have been extended by the Liberal Government if they had not been fettered by their own Home Rule promises, and I am certain they could have got round it if they had so wished. The Irish politicians had allowed the more ignorant of their supporters to believe that under Home Rule they would have no taxes to pay (they paid devilish few as it was, and have to pay many more now under compulsion in these days of Daill Eireann!), and hence the slogan was popular in many parts. But the real truth lay in a question asked by a Nationalist demagogue of a District Inspector at Clonmel in 1913: "Tell me now, is there any *danger* of Home Rule coming next year?" And with that we may leave it.

As for my views on the military situation—*i.e.*, the rôle that the troops under my command should play in case of a rising, or at all events in case of an Ulster Provisional Government being formed—they were perhaps entitled to somewhat more consideration than my views on politics in general or the Home Rule Bill in particular. Having friends or acquaintances in both camps, and having an excellent Intelligence officer (though not an official one) in the shape of my Supply officer, Major Berry of the A.S.C., a native of those parts, and with a large circle of friends on both sides, I think I may say that, after studying the question thoroughly for two years, I had a fair idea of what was likely

to be the situation. Briefly, my views were as follows :—

If the Home Rule Bill should be passed—and it was practically certain to pass in May or June 1914—a Provisional Government was bound to be formed in Ulster, both for the purpose of standing out against Home Rule and for that of keeping order. This Government would doubtless be an amateur affair as regards administration; but they would be able to depend on the help of their 100,000 Volunteers (who would be completely under their control) to keep order as far as possible.

The question at once arose, should the King's troops take immediate action—seize, say, and occupy the Town Hall, the Customs House, the Post Office, &c.? Or if, as would certainly be one of the first things to happen, all Roman Catholics were to be swept out of the big works in the city—starting in all probability in the shipyards, where it would be extremely likely that some Catholics would be killed in the process—were we to take action on their behalf? In the town itself, where all the drinking shops were in the hands of Catholics, there would be a noble opportunity for all the Protestant ruffians in the neighbourhood to quench their thirst and display their patriotism at the same time. There was also a proportion of respectable Unionists devoted with zeal from a religious standpoint; and it was by no means certain that their unbridled anti-Catholic frenzy would not drive them into acts of which they would otherwise be incapable. Again, it was possible that the police-barracks might be stormed by Unionist corner-boys with the object of obtaining arms, and anti-Catholic riots in various quarters would be extremely likely to occur. If we were called out to put down these riots, bloodshed would be almost certain to result, and the fat would be in the fire.

There was no doubt at all that the Provisional

Government would take over the policing of the town—with or without the help of the existing police—and that they probably intended to replace my two battalions in Victoria Barracks and Holywood by their own Volunteers (possibly kidnapping me in the process). In any case their intention was to paralyse the action of my troops by blockading the exits from barracks and the streets leading thereto with a silent and solid mass of armed men.

What stood out more clearly than anything else was that the last thing that the Unionists desired was to come into collision with the troops. But if they blockaded us in barracks and cut our communications, were we passively to acquiesce, or should we force our way out, which would inevitably lead to bloodshed and probably to civil war? For if the Catholics heard that the King's troops were firing on the Unionists there would be risings all over the country.

On the other hand, if the British Government decided to send large numbers of troops to overawe the populace and preserve order, where would they quarter them—inside the town or out? If inside, they would be blockaded by the Volunteers, and if outside, the Volunteers could prevent their access to the main portions of the city, except at the cost of fighting.

My conclusion, therefore—written at the end of 1913 in a report of some length, based on the above arguments, to my superior military authorities—was that, if civil war was to be avoided, no further troops should be sent, and no Regular troops, or even police, should be used for putting down riots of any sort. For the main object of the Unionist leaders was to preserve order, and the local Ulster Volunteers were not only quite willing but quite capable of putting down every disturbance. And if this course meant the undignified one, on our part, of recognising an illegal Government for the time being,



well, it could not be helped. Anyway, it was better than civil war.

I do not know what effect my report had, or even whether it was read by the superior authorities; but the few instructions I subsequently received were strangely in consonance with my views as recorded above.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

BELFAST, 1914.

WHEN Parliament got to work again on the subject of Ireland, the question of the exclusion of Ulster from the Home Rule Bill began to arise. In Ulster there were different opinions on this matter; but, on the whole, they were negative, for the Government was not trusted, and the dour and cautious Northerners suspected a trap somewhere. They were right, for when the proposal was put into shape it amounted only to exclusion for six years of any county that wanted it, signifying its wishes by the electoral vote and not by a plébiscite. Ulster sniffed doubtfully at the cheese suspended in the trap, and then decided that it 'was not taking any.' Carson said that if the six years' condition was dropped he might think about it and consult Ulster, not otherwise. But even this Government proposal relieved the tension in the air a bit, for it was recognised that the idea of the physical coercion of Ulster was vanishing. And on the Roman Catholic side it added to the jumble of ideas, if one may judge from a story told me by Lord Leitrim, whom I went to see on the question of possible trouble in Londonderry. He said that a certain priest had attended a meeting of priests only three days before in order to try and arrive at some method of combating and stopping Home Rule, and on the following day the same priest had taken the chair at a meeting in favour of Home Rule!

Henry Wilson, Ulsterman by birth,<sup>2</sup> turned up about this time in order to investigate the question in person. But he was very secretive in his conversations with me, and during his three days' visit was closeted with a number of Unionist leaders; and he left without giving me an inkling of his views on the subject, though I could fairly well guess what they were. But I told him my views, and he did not disagree with me.

Meanwhile Mr Nagle, the Roman Catholic Resident Magistrate, a very nice level-headed fellow, gave me an instance of the tension existing, which might quite easily develop into an explosion by even the smallest spark. A Protestant girl had been dismissed for some misconduct at some mill where she was working, and her place filled by a Catholic woman; there were seven other Roman Catholic women at the mill. The Protestant girls thereupon set upon the Catholic one, and, although she was in the family way, beat her so severely that she had to be taken to hospital. They also beat the other Catholics and drove them out.

Luckily the first Catholic victim was a very sensible woman, and she refused to take action, although her assailants were known. Had they been arrested there would have been an outbreak in all the mills, and a very unpleasant riot would certainly have followed, leading probably to outbreaks on a large scale. So the whole matter was hushed up.

Colonel Repington—the deadly enemy of Henry Wilson, by the way, for private reasons—also turned up a few days later. He had come over, for the 'Times,' to study the Ulster Volunteer Force; and he told me he was much impressed by their immense power—110,000 by now, or more, organised into divisions of three regiments of three battalions each, twenty battalions (30,000 men) in Belfast alone. The force was divided into home and field armies, the latter containing about 50,000 men, whilst the

former, consisting of older men, were to keep order in their respective districts. They had machine-guns, transmission troops (excellent), aeroplanes and ambulances, and every arrangement had been made for breaking down railways and harassing troops with light columns. He also considered that Sir George Richardson (Commander-in-Chief) and Colonel Hackett Pain (Chief of Staff) were excellent men for their jobs, and doing well.

Meanwhile the Roman Catholics were beginning to arm, though more with revolvers than rifles, and the brave Protestant lads of 'Derry were itching to flesh their weapons in somebody, for choice in the 'Ancient Order of Hibernians,' who had been jeering at them for drilling with wooden rifles and taunting them with the general amateurishness of their proceedings.

But no one believed in a Catholic rising if the Home Rule Bill were dropped. There was neither the spirit nor the organisation for that, nor enough rifles.

A fairly large bombshell fell on 18th March when I was at Mullingar inspecting the Bedfords, for I received a wire on that morning to say that the Carrickfergus garrison was to be augmented, all gates of barracks in my brigade were to be kept shut and the guard thereon doubled! On my way back to Belfast I gathered that there was some idea of an expected attack on arms and ammunition. Carrickfergus, an old Norman castle on the Lough shore, was certainly the receptacle-store for our ammunition; but there was not very much there, and the only entrance, over an ancient drawbridge, was so narrow and crooked, according to the best Norman rules, that two or three riflemen could have held it against a thousand. However, I added about thirty-eight men to the tiny garrison there of a few artillery and Ordnance store men, and considered that more than sufficient.

Next night, when dining with the Judges of Assize, I was called up from dinner in order to receive a special messenger from Dublin, bearing orders for me to send two companies of the Bedfords to Enniskillen, one to Omagh and one to Armagh. The Cheshire company at Enniskillen was to rejoin its battalion at 'Derry, and the Dorsets and my own Brigade Headquarters in Victoria Barracks at Belfast were to join the Norfolks at Holywood on the other side of the Lough !

I gave effect to these orders on the following day, and in the evening Colonel L. Friend<sup>1</sup> turned up from Dublin with alarming news: that one company Yorkshire Light Infantry would arrive by sea at Carrickfergus to-morrow at daybreak; that the Government were talking of sending the 1st Division and 18th and 11th Brigades and three battalions from Scotland to Larne; whilst two companies Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry had gone to Newry and two to Dundalk (14th Brigade); that there would be a big movement on to-morrow, and the country would probably be ablaze !

We discussed these portents with solemnity, all the more so as the evening papers reported the resignation of Hubert Gough and nearly all the officers of the Cavalry Brigade at the Curragh that morning, they having received a practical ultimatum from the War Office that unless they acted against Ulster if ordered, they were to send their papers in.

Carson, by the way, arrived that morning (Friday) from London after a scene in the House in which he and Devlin crossed most noisy swords. According to the evening papers, I had been sent for to London.

The Saturday on which Ulster was to be 'ablaze' passed most quietly at Holywood and Belfast. The general impression was that, after Winston Churchill's speech at Bradford a few days ago, the Government

<sup>1</sup> We had shared rooms together in Cairo thirteen years before.

were determining to put the Ulster question 'to the proof,' as he said, and were irritating and intimidating Ulster by sending troops there in the hopes of the Ulster Volunteer Force firing the first shot and thereby putting themselves in the wrong. The rights and wrongs of the Curragh incident nobody quite understood; the papers were most inaccurate as regards our own force and contradictory regarding the Curragh, and were not the least to be trusted. Saturday fizzled out in 'wars and rumours of wars,' with nothing definite to go upon except that the authorities in London were in a great stew, and the wildest reports were flying about: that the Government was going out; that Parliament would be prorogued on Monday; that Seely<sup>1</sup> had resigned, &c., &c., &c.

Meanwhile Ulster was perfectly calm. Neither Unionists nor Nationalists made the smallest move. The Unionists, though, of course, their nerves were on the strain, showed the tranquillity of well-armed and well-conscienced men, and the Catholics made no sign.

Sunday was a delightful day and passed again in absolute calm, chiefly, as far as I was concerned, in playing squash-racquets. Friend drew up the boundaries of a new Belfast district:

Next morning Colonel Macready<sup>2</sup> arrived and took over from Friend. He brought the news—having been at several Cabinet Councils lately and being behind the scenes altogether—that all this movement was based on insufficient evidence of a threatened raid on Omagh, Armagh and Carrickfergus, or rather in Monaghan and Tyrone. Nobody seemed to know exactly by whom this raid was threatened, but the Government got in a panic and issued these orders, which were purely precautionary and nothing else. As for the resignations, he was convinced that

<sup>1</sup> Then S.S. War.

<sup>2</sup> D.P.S. at the War Office.

they were entirely based on a misunderstanding, for at the Cabinet Council at which Sir Arthur Paget<sup>1</sup> received his final instructions, he was asked whether he would not prefer the latter in writing. In his lordly way he said no—he quite understood them and would carry them out; but he seems to have misunderstood them thoroughly and taken it that the movements ordered were the genesis of a general advance on Ulster.

Now, putting the Curragh incident aside for the moment, how were we to reconcile Macready's statements with the facts?

First of all there were the bellicose speeches of Winston Churchill and Lloyd George at Huddersfield, foreshadowing distinctly grave action in the near future.

Secondly, what was this rumour of a threatened raid for arms on Carrickfergus and the other places? Who was going to make the raid, Catholics or Unionists? And who said they were going to raid? (Neither the police nor I knew anything about it, and our intelligence service was rather good: but we were after all not omniscient.) Was the threatened raid a fact, or was it imaginary?

Thirdly, why were the Government talking of sending a large force—practically two divisions—to Larne? Was this a 'purely precautionary' measure for preventing small raids for arms on the towns mentioned? And why—though this we did not know till afterwards—had a naval squadron been ordered to Lamlash? And why should a cavalry squadron be ordered to occupy the bridges over the Boyne? Surely you would not use cavalry for protecting arms and stores?

There would be no question of a Provisional Government being declared until the Home Rule Bill was passed in May or June, and there was no trouble at present, so why send these troops?

<sup>1</sup> C.-in-C. in Ireland.

But, on the other hand, if big measures were intended, why distribute these tiny units, one company here, another there, all over Ulster? This did not look like sound strategy on the part of anyone if serious action were contemplated. What did it all mean? We puzzled our heads about it for some time, but could reach no conclusion; and neither the Curragh nor Dublin could throw any more light on the intentions of the Government, though the Curragh had plenty to talk about on its own account.

The Curragh trouble started in this way. Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Paget attended, by order, a Cabinet Council in London on 19th March, and received there his final instructions with regard to Ireland. He refused, as noted above, to have them put on paper, and returned to Dublin by the night-mail. Next morning, the 20th, he called a pow-wow of his officers in Dublin, and gave them his interpretation of the instructions; and later on in the day he repeated the process at the Curragh, with the result that Gough and several other Irish officers resigned their commissions on the spot.

Now what the exact Cabinet instructions were and what Arthur Paget's interpretation of them was—whether he misunderstood them or not—we shall probably never know. He would not allow any officers present to take notes, but many of them wrote down, immediately afterwards, what they considered to have been the gist of his remarks. And the notes coincided in almost all respects—*i.e.*, that the General had given the strong impression, amounting to a practical certainty, that active operations on a large scale were to be undertaken at once. He began by saying, "You will think that what I am going to say is theatrical, but I can assure you that we are on the eve of very big things, and that Ulster will be in a blaze to-morrow." He added that he would not, even now, move for the —



Government were it not that he had their definite and specific assurance that the moves were actually sanctioned by the King. And he gave orders for a Dublin squadron to be held in readiness to seize the bridges over the Boyne.

As regards the 'ultimatum' to the effect that officers who might refuse to march against Ulster were to resign their commissions at once, he first of all presented it to Gough (with the result we all know) at, I think, a more or less private interview, and at the big pow-wow, at which Gough was not present, told the G.O.C.'s to deliver it, with the domiciliary qualification, to their officers. I forget the details, but the Brigadiers agreed, from loyalty to the King and a desire to prevent the disruption of the Army *only*, to march if ordered, but nothing more. And the Divisional Commander<sup>1</sup> (and the Brigadiers) went round their battalions next day urging the officers and men not to refuse to move, for these were the King's orders, however distasteful they might be. Some battalions were very sticky, but they all gave in, mainly owing to C. F.'s personal persuasion, though many, almost necessarily, did it with a bad grace.

Yet I have it now on absolutely certain authority that not only did the King *not* sanction the moves, but that the orders were sent out before he even knew that they were intended! What were we soldiers to think of a Government which behaved like that! As I wrote at the time, "I think that this is the blackest feature of all this murky business, and that it goes far towards substantiating the theory of a plot (to stir up Ulster into rebellion) which I have outlined above."

Gough went to the War Office on the 23rd March and laid his case before Major Seely (then Secretary of State for War), General Sir John French (C.I.G.S.), and Major-General J. S. Ewart (my old friend, who

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Sir Charles Fergusson.

was then Adjutant-General). And he extracted a document from them, initialled by all three, the last paragraph of which ran: "His Majesty's Government must retain their right to use all the forces of the Crown in Ireland or elsewhere to maintain law and order and to support the civil power in the execution of its duty. But they have no intention whatever of taking advantage of this right to crush political opposition to the policy or the principles of the Home Rule Bill." So far, good. But on the following day Gough, not entirely convinced, pressed for a more definite explanation as to whether the above document meant that he might tell his officers that they would not be obliged to serve against Ulster, and French wrote and initialled words to the effect that that was how he understood it. So off went Gough, back to the Curragh, hugging these precious documents in his bosom. And he and his brother officers were shortly reinstated in their commissions.

But his documents led to important results. On the 25th, Mr Asquith gave an explanation in Parliament of what had occurred since the 19th, and repudiated the memorandum of the 23rd, whereupon Seely apologised for having signed it without consulting his colleagues, and resigned. His resignation was not accepted, and thereupon both French and Ewart resigned. They were pressed to reconsider their decision, but they stuck to it and definitely resigned, together with Seely, on 31st March. Mr Asquith then took over the War Office.

On reconsideration of the whole matter, my theory regarding the Government's doings was that action on a big scale *was* contemplated in some form; that these unsubstantiable rumours of attacks<sup>1</sup> on arms and ammunition were genuinely accepted by the Government and 'precautionary' movements ordered

<sup>1</sup> Birrell said later in the House of Commons that Nationalists were *not* suspected of this.

(and d——d badly ordered) in consequence, the Government's hand being in effect forced by these rumours.

Further rumours as to Carson's action frightened them into sending these battleships; but *all the time* they had at the back of their minds that this would be a good opportunity for irritating the Unionists past endurance and making them start their Provisional Government and take up arms against the troops, and the Unionists would thereby be put in the wrong. Hence they could move more troops over from England, Arthur Paget's statement having been that it would not be possible to proceed against the Ulster Volunteer Force with less than 20,000 troops.

The whole policy was a dirty one, all the dirtier because it was not a clear one, even to themselves. They meant to send troops to take *genuinely* precautionary measures in the first instance, thinking that they would kill two birds with one stone, and thereby irritate the Ulstermen into taking steps which would put themselves (Ulstermen) in the wrong, and which would justify the Government in sending over strong forces to coerce them. And if the Ulstermen showed sufficient control and did not burst out, they could say that these movements were purely precautionary, and they could prove it.

The Ulstermen's self-control it was that stopped this Machiavellian game, and Gough's action (a result of A. P.'s misconception of the apparent—or was it true conception of the real?—intentions of the Government) gave them an extremely nasty jar, and proved to them that the Army was not prepared to act as a cat's-paw in carrying out their dirty jobs.

The whole matter was mismanaged from start to finish, and the chaotic bungle that ensued recoiled in entangling folds on the heads of those responsible for it.

On 1st April I was allowed to take my headquarters back to Belfast, but the Dorsets were kept

at Holywood for another week or so. I had enjoyed my stay at Holywood—the best and prettiest and most country-like barracks in the whole of the United Kingdom; and though I received sympathising letters from several of my friends who desired to condole with me in my ‘terribly anxious situation,’ I must own that whilst news was, almost daily, of a highly exciting nature, I had very little to do except talk to people, and I spent most of my time playing either squash-racquets or lawn-tennis! Thank the Lord, the ‘ultimatum’ which was delivered to all the other troops in Ireland was never sent to the 15th Brigade, whether by accident or design I do not know. And hence all of us were saved much anxiety and trouble. But Macready was always running backwards and forwards between London and Belfast, and we derived much information from him. One piece, however, he neglected to give me, and that was that he had orders in his pocket that in certain specific eventualities he was to take over the Governorship of the Belfast district *and* the constabulary, thus superseding me. Which again meant that great events had been contemplated by the Government, otherwise why send such an important officer to take command?

Meanwhile the Nationalists had not been idle, and for some months past had been organising a Volunteer Force throughout Ireland—from the Home Rule point of view. The idea was, of course, to form a counterblast to the Ulster Volunteer Force and come to the rescue of the Catholics of the North when the ‘Black Protestants’ had declared their ‘brutal and oppressive’ Provisional Government. I might mention by the way that ‘Black Papist’ was also the term used by Ulstermen in describing a Catholic who was particularly zealous in upholding the claims of his religion, and, of course, ‘To hell with the Pope’ was their usual battle-cry when they argued with or assaulted one of the opposite faith. Even though matters were fairly peaceful at the time, the

country was evidently boiling up for serious trouble ; and if Nationalist and Ulster Volunteers were allowed to go for each others' throats—and, with the inborn pugnacity of all Irishmen, whether South or North, they would be only too delighted to do so—something would happen which would not easily be distinguishable from civil war.

Meanwhile I was always rather nervous about the shipyards, for it was generally thereabouts that trouble was wont to start. There were, as I think I have previously said, 15,000 or more workmen engaged there, of which only about 700 were Catholics, and the *modus operandi* was generally the following. Whilst a Catholic was engaged quietly on his work, a Protestant emissary would come up behind him and whisper, "Ye'd better be getting out of these works, unless ye want to be a dead man to-morrow !" And most of them would take the hint. But the more plucky ones did not.

Now at twelve noon every day the big syren would go for the dinner-hour, and 15,000 men would surge out in a torrent from the yards, completely filling the broad Queen's Road. And what had happened more than once was that at a given moment the obnoxious Catholic would be knocked senseless from behind, thrown down in the moving mass, and his head kicked to pieces. Even if trouble were anticipated, and the Harbour Police were close by, and City Police and even troops, no help could be rendered owing to the huge mass of workmen. And no one could (or would) tell who had done it. On one occasion a Catholic had been hustled over the edge of the quay into the filthy water, and there, standing waist-deep in the slime, he was pelted with stones and 'confetti'<sup>1</sup> until he died.

<sup>1</sup> 'Belfast confetti' were the round sharp-edged steel discs, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, stamped out of steel plates in the process of boring rivet-holes. The men used to fill their pockets with them—and they made most excellent missiles.

The Harbour Police, too, a body of worthy but rather elderly men, were not always too anxious to risk their skins in trying a rescue since one of their number, who had been rather too inquisitive in well-doing, had been thrown at night into the river and never been heard of again.

Our attention was, however, suddenly turned in quite a new direction. My wife and I had been staying with Lord and Lady Decies for the Punctestown Races from 20th to 24th April, and I remembered afterwards that I had been most strongly pressed to stay on for another two days, but had refused, as I wanted to get back. Anyway, on the morning of Saturday the 25th I was called up by Commissioner Smith, the excellent head of the Belfast Constabulary, and told that the Ulster Volunteer Force had at last got to work. They certainly had the cheek of the devil! for on the previous night they had partially mobilised, and in Bangor, Larne and Belfast had practically held up the authorities till they had landed three big cargoes of rifles and ammunition.

As I found out afterwards, the *Mountjoy* had met the *Fanny* off the Tuskar lightship on the night of Sunday, 19th; trans-shipped her rifles on to herself on that night and Monday night; cruised about the channel Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; arrived at Larne very early Friday morning; dumped rifles for West Ulster on the quay at Larne; trans-shipped others to the two steamers for Donaghadee and Belfast lying alongside; and brought the rest of the rifles herself to Bangor on Saturday morning.

At Bangor they had a picture-palace show to account for so many Ulster Volunteer Force being in the streets, sent a couple of hundred there, and with the rest surrounded the police and coastguard stations, and gently refused to allow them to move till they had landed their rifles.

At Larne they did the same, with a mile of motor-

cars outside, and stopped all exits. At both places the police, or at all events the coastguards, roared with laughter at the trick. Wires were 'earthed,' not cut, so that nothing could go through.

At Belfast a steamer arrived at the quays, and her captain refused to allow the police or Custom House authorities to see what he had on board. When at last *force majeure* prevailed, the hatches were opened and searched, and there was nothing except coal. Meanwhile another and genuine steamer unloaded all her rifles, &c., at Workman & Clarke's quay opposite, and distributed them to an attendant squadron of motor-cars!

Macready turned up from the War Office on the Sunday evening, full of desire to make the Ulster Volunteer Force laugh on the wrong side of their mouths. But after talking it over with us, I think that he was not quite so cocksure of being able to do it. He seemed to think that Smith or ourselves ought to have known beforehand of this gun-running. I pointed out that Smith had no jurisdiction outside Belfast, and that it was not the business of us soldiers to stop gun-running or smuggling, or to know about it, especially since the incipient Intelligence Department that I had proposed had been abolished.

Macready seemed to think that the only thing to do was to fill Ulster up with troops; but I did not see that that would do much good. The Ulster Volunteer Force had certainly committed an overt act and put themselves in the wrong; but sending troops to Ulster would be very much a case of shutting the stable-door after the steed was stolen. A few days later the Government decided to prosecute the chief leaders of the gun-running exploit; but eventually nothing whatever was done except sending a cruiser and eighteen destroyers of the latest oil type, who busily patrolled the empty sea between Malin Head and Carlingford Lough (at an estimated

cost of £3500 a day). I went to luncheon in the cruiser, the *Swift*, a freak oil-ship and the fastest ship (37 knots) in the world, and was much interested in her engines and armament.

I found out afterwards that 4000 of the Ulster rifles were Italian, for County Down, whilst the rest of the consignment were new Mausers, for Antrim, Derry and Donegal. Belfast meanwhile was armed with single-loader Martini-Enfield .303 rifles; but owing to our precautions in changing our Mark VI. for Mark VII. ammunition, Government cartridges would not have fitted them. The Ulster Volunteer Force staff worked six days of seven hours each to perfect the coup; and I discovered that Mr Charles Allan, with whom I had played golf two days afterwards on his private course at Stormont, and who had professed himself horrified at the Ulster Volunteer Force doings, had great masses of the rifles and ammunition hidden in his stables there all the time!

I also made a private discovery on my own account. For in spending a week-end at Antrim Castle I went to fetch some lawn-tennis balls from the long box in the hall in which they were usually kept. But their place had been taken by something much more reprehensible. I shall never forget the noble owner's face when I acquainted him with the result of my search!



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## BOILING UP FOR TROUBLE—AND WAR.

ON Thursday, 21st May, the third reading of the Home Rule Bill began, and Macready returned to Belfast with very satisfactory instructions. They were to the effect that if the Provisional Government were declared, the troops were to sit tight in Holywood and do nothing; that the Lord Mayor, and not the Government, was responsible for order being kept in Belfast, and that he could use the police and, if necessary, the Ulster Volunteer Force for this purpose, but that he was not to call on the troops except in the very last necessity. And then, even if we were called on, we were not to get mixed up with the crowd, but to stay in Victoria and two other police barracks and not take part in any row if we could possibly help it. (My own original recommendations almost to a T!)

The new Lord Mayor had apparently been under the impression that in case of the smallest ruction the Army would at once fly to his assistance, so that these instructions came to him as a nasty jar.

One rather funny thing happened about this time. Major Done's company of the Norfolks were, in the course of company-training, practising night-outposts in the neighbourhood of Craigavon. Some Ulster Volunteers who were practising at a miniature range close by saw them, got the jumps and telephoned to Ulster Headquarters that a night-movement was on.

Two battalions were promptly mobilised without the Norfolks knowing anything about it, and there was a great fuss in the papers next day, asserting that the Ulster leaders' houses had been surrounded by troops, &c., &c. And though Ballard, the commanding officer of the Norfolks, wrote to the local papers explaining, and giving the future dates of his battalion's movements, the 'Daily Mail' and 'Daily Express,' as usual, tried to make a row over it; and Lloyd George in the House, by making a silly mystery about it, made it much worse.

Within a few days a motor-car tyre burst with a loud report in one of the suburbs, upon which the local Volunteers, both Ulster and Nationalist, rushed to arms! At Warrenpoint, too, some Roman Catholics attacked the band of a Protestant Portadown excursion party on the rumour that they had committed sacrilege in a Roman Catholic church and made speeches from the altar, the real truth being that a girl and a couple of boys had been skylarking in the porch, and the girl had dipped her hand into the holy-water font, and no doubt splashed the water about! There was no doubt at all that both sides were becoming extremely jumpy.

On the other hand, it was becoming a normal state of affairs to have these large forces in being, and many a Nationalist farmer hired out his fields for the Ulster Volunteers to drill in, and brought his Catholic brethren to watch them and pick up hints on the subject. Many a time, too, did I, returning at night to my house, hear words of command being given in the fields alongside, and, as previously mentioned, saw shadowy bodies of men moving about in the darkness.

On one afternoon I went, in uniform, to inspect the Church Lads' Brigade in Belfast Castle Park, and to my amusement found several bodies of the Ulster Volunteer Force being drilled—rather shamefacedly when they saw me—by ex-sergeants quite close to

my parade. Hereabouts it was, too, that a delicious incident had occurred. A certain energetic young Volunteer was drilling his squad, and he had occasion to form them in line and advance towards a wall. But as they got near the wall the word of command for making them retire entirely vanished from his brain, and the front rank was already kicking its toes at the wall when the commander suddenly had an inspiration and shouted out "Advance—backwards!" And when the Ulster Volunteer Force nurses were being inspected in line by some of the 'rebel' leaders, the sergeant in charge, not happy with the alignment, called out, "Pick up your dressing by the right!" Upon which one nurse, and then another, and another, looking shyly around, began picking up their skirts.

Meanwhile the Nationalist Volunteers were rapidly augmenting in numbers. They had been started independently of Redmond, the Nationalist leader, who did not like the idea at all. But as the force grew, Redmond recognised that it must be kept under proper control, or it might do great harm, and with considerable difficulty he managed to get it into his own hands. One Colonel Moore, an ex-Connaught Ranger, was Commander-in-Chief, and reports about him varied. Some said he was a holy terror, and had nearly been kicked out of the Army during the Boer War for his disloyal sentiments and expressions; and others said that he was a harmless and somewhat inefficient old gentleman. I expect the truth lay between the two. But finding myself on one of my numerous visits to 'Derry staying in the same lodging-house<sup>1</sup> as Captain White, of temporary Nationalist fame, I had a long talk with him on the subject.

The son of Field-Marshal Sir George White, that

<sup>1</sup> That of Mrs M'Mahon, ex-housekeeper to the Duke of Abercorn, a dear old character who always provided for breakfast quite the most delicious bacon I have ever eaten.

fine old Loyalist Ulsterman, he was not half so 'cranky' as I had been led to believe. He told me that the Nationalist Volunteer Force was then officially estimated at already about 80,000 men, but that there was little organisation about them, and that the companies would not readily combine into battalions. That these companies were always imploring him to come and inspect them, in order that the publican who was generally at the back of these invitations might collect a crowd of thirsty inhabitants attracted partly by his name and partly by the rare spectacle of seeing a gentleman in command; and he was getting rather tired of it. He also said that there were but few rifles in the force, though they had a large number of revolvers, mostly of inferior makes, and that the 'battalion' unit was used more for electioneering than for military purposes. Altogether Captain White struck me as being merely an energetic and somewhat unpractical idealist—with quite sensibly-expressed feelings about the desirability of making Ireland a self-contained and loyal factor in the Imperial scheme, but with no definite ideas as to how the thing was to be brought about. He was rather amused at finding himself a public character, and hailed by irresponsible newspapers as the 'Napoleon of the Nationalist Volunteers'; and he was making the most of it while it lasted by taking a prominent part in a movement whose objects he but vaguely understood and whose members he thoroughly despised. After that he faded away, and I have no doubt that he did his duty in the Great War.

The great day came and went; on the 25th May the Home Rule Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons by a majority of 77 (with a majority of 44 English members against it). But though we were confined to barracks for two days there was not the vestige of a shadow of a row anywhere, for the Bill had not yet passed the Lords,

and Mr Asquith, in order to put off the evil moment, was introducing an Amending Bill into the House of Lords. That Bill—merely repeating the already spurned offer to exclude Ulster by county declaration for six years—was ‘gutted’ by the Lords and only passed by them as a stopgap. It was then sent to the Commons, who started mangling its unhappy carcase.

June passed fairly quietly, with the Nationalist Volunteers increasing in numbers. But a curious calm was in the air. The strain had been lasting so long it seemed as though both sides had called a truce preparatory to the troublous days ahead, and in many cases the two species of Volunteers actually fraternised and compared notes on their respective discipline and armament, and even vied with each other, as at Londonderry, in putting down small riots that occurred and in trying to get an equally good name in keeping their own rowdies quiet! But lapses occasionally occurred, such as the Nationalist Volunteer Force man who shot his own drill-instructor in the stomach for insisting on his ‘forming fours’ correctly, and not according to the Volunteer’s own and original plan; and there was no doubt that the publicans (nearly all Roman Catholics) encouraged drill on both sides for the benefit of business. Still, there was holy peace for the time being, and even the 12th July, which date all authorities were dreading as being likely to lead to an explosion, passed over without the smallest ructions.

The 20th July was to have been the all-important day for settling the fate of the Amending Bill. But a surprise was in store for everyone, for the ‘Times’ announced that the King had called a conference of two members from each of the four parties, presided over by the Speaker, to sit at Buckingham Palace. One more desperate effort at a respite at the last moment!

I think there is no doubt that if the amendments of the Lords to the Amending Bill had been rejected by the Commons (as they would have been in the normal course of events), and the Bill passed by the Commons as it stood, the Provisional Government would have been declared in the next few days, and for this I have the authority of more than one 'rebel' in high quarters. I consequently went to see my friend, Commissioner Smith of the Constabulary, to find out what he intended to do. He had had no orders from Dublin; if he were ordered to occupy certain points with his police, he would, of course, do so, but equally, of course, he expected to be overwhelmed by the Ulster Volunteer Force, whom he had no intention at all of fighting. He did not expect them to raid the police-barracks for arms. I entirely agreed with him, and wrote to Macready—who was now my superior officer in these things—that in case the Provisional Government were declared I should withdraw the Dorsets to Holywood, leaving only one hundred men in Belfast, and that I should not interfere at all except in the one case, that of real and serious danger to the police. Macready thoroughly concurred in my views; so that was that, and I felt much more at ease, with clear orders for a *dolce far niente* before me.

The Buckingham Palace conference sat from the 21st to the 24th July amidst intense excitement, and broke up on the latter day, not having been able to agree on the 'principle or area' of exclusion. The Amending Bill was therefore put down for renewed discussion in the House on the 28th. It looked as though the Government were pursuing their policy of drift to the last verge of danger, probably in hopes that there would be an outbreak in Ulster owing to the tension snapping: hardly a statesmanlike proceeding. But I may have maligned them.

On the night of the 26th, Macready, who had been hunted back to Belfast, much against his will, in order to try and find out what the Provisional Government would attempt to do—as if it were likely that the ‘rebels’ would tell him!—rang me up with startling news—the first and garbled version of the K.O.S.B.’s in Dublin. And I add a short extract from my diary: “Another item of news is that Serbia has refused to give in to the outrageous demands of Austria, and that Germany and Russia are mobilising! It will be really comic if the assassination of Franz Ferdinand is going to settle the Irish question!”

Yet it did—anyway for the duration of the war.

The K.O.S.B. story was as follows. The Assistant Commissioner of Dublin Police, Harrel by name, hearing that a yacht was going to land rifles for the Nationalists at Howth, sent police and requisitioned troops (two companies of the K.O.S.B.’s) to stop them. They managed to collar about twenty rifles, the rest of the Volunteers escaping with theirs into Dublin. Two of the K.O.S.B.’s were shot in the legs. On their return through the town the K.O.S.B.’s were followed by a howling mob, who assaulted and threw stones and bottles at them. Finally, after practically every officer and man had been hit, the men lost their tempers and fired at the mob, killing three and wounding about twenty.

There was, of course, a frightful howl from the Nationalist Press, with a *soupçon* of justification about it, for why should the Government have taken no action in the case of the thousands of Ulster rifles, yet pounced at once on those of the poor Nationalist Volunteers? Anyhow, poor Harrel was thrown to the wolves, for the Government stated in the House that he had no business to try to collar the rifles, and disowned and suspended him; and furthermore, they laid down a new legal theory—

that once rifles were landed and outside the docks the authorities could not touch them! Redmond, thereupon, with some show of justice, demanded the cancelling of the Arms Proclamation Act.

There was a fearful hullabaloo throughout the country; and von Kühlmann, councillor to the German Embassy in London, with his finger on the pulse of the British public, and 'sensing' the immediate outbreak of civil war in Ireland, wired to his Government, "*Nun kann's los gehen!*" And it did—with a vengeance.

\* \* \* \* \*

The precautionary period for national danger was declared on the 29th, and the troops were sent to their war-stations, completely reshuffling the garrisons in Ulster, so that, had the Government wanted to employ us against the 'rebels,' they could not have done so. (I always wondered whether they realised this at the time.) Meanwhile Europe was in a turmoil. Our mobilisation orders arrived at 5.30 P.M. on the 4th August; we declared war on Germany that night; the first reservists arrived on the 6th; everything went like clockwork; we were completely mobilised to war strength in every detail by the 10th; and on the 14th the brigade, consisting of the Dorsets, the Norfolks, the Cheshires and the Bedfords, left the shores of Ulster for those of France.

And here we must leave them for the present. Are not their fighting and their marching and their wonderful spirit recorded, for as long as they remained under my command, in detail in my little book, 'The Doings of the Fifteenth Infantry Brigade, August 1914 to March 1915'?<sup>1</sup> And as for my own subsequent command of the 37th Division and my directorship of the Political Intelligence Bureau, together with other activities which followed my

<sup>1</sup> Blackwood & Sons, 1917.



retirement from the Service in 1919, why should I make further demands on the patience of the reader who has followed me thus far ?

Perchance—as is common in these days of strenuous veterans—I shall, on reaching the ripe age of eighty, take up my pen again and recount a few thoughts of my later days ; but until then—farewell.





## AIDE-de-CAMP'S LIBRARY

---

*Accn. No.*.....

1. Books may be retained for a period not exceeding fifteen days.